FIVE
LETTERS,
FROM A
FREE MERCHANT in BENGAL,
TO
WARREN HASTINGS, *Esq.*

Sir Gopi Rajan 1817

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LETTERS,

FROM A

[F]REE MERCHANT IN BENGAL,

TO

WARREN HASTINGS, Esq.

GOVERNOR GENERAL

OF THE

HONORABLE EAST INDIA COMPANY's

SETTLEMENTS IN ASIA;

CONVEYING

Some free Thoughts on the probable Causes of the *Decline* of the *Export Trade* of that Kingdom;

AND A

Rough Sketch, or *Outlines* of a *Plan*, for *restoring* it to its *former Splendor*.

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LETTER I.

FROM A

FREE MERCHANT in BENGAL,

TO

WARREN HASTINGS, *Esq.*

HONOURABLE SIR;

YOUR restoration to power, though by such an accident as that of the death of Colonel Monson, has given great pleasure to the well wishers to the prosperity of Bengal, particularly as it has happened at so critical a time, when the leases of the whole lands of the kingdom are to be renewed. You have now an opportunity (uninterrupted by the cavils of selfish and interested men) to exert your acknowledged abilities in Asiatic financing, as well as to correct any mistakes which you might have made in your former adjustment, by the Committee of Circuit.

What you have done since your acceffion to the chair, in fettling the Company's revenues on a proper bafis, and regulating their civil and military expences, is well known to every man at home and abroad, the leaft converfant in the affairs of this country. I fhall draw from it the only argument I think neceffary to prove, that it i from your integrity and abilities alone, we ca hope to fee effected what yet remains undone, to make the natives of this country the happieft people under the fun, and the poffeffion of thefe provinces the brighteft gem in the Britifh crown.

Convinced that the extraordinary pains taken by your enemies, to accumulate falfe and unfupported charges againft you, by every unjuftifiabe means, in the hope thereby to overwhelm you n the opinion of the Englifh nation, will be feen through and defpifed, I have not a doubt of your triumphing over them from the juftice of you caufe. Yet fhould I be miftaken, and the fuperior minifterial intereft, fo much boafted of by themfelves and agents, fhould prevail for the prefent, you muft, and will, in the end, be confulted, and advifed with, by your Prince and fellow fubjects, in order to bring to perfection the grea work you have begun.

My intention in addreffing this to you, is with the hope, that fome of the hints it contains wil

be of uſe, when you ſhall come to form a plan for reſtoring the now languiſhing export trade of this country. Simple, crude, and undigeſted, as they are, ſuch a penetration as yours will extract ſomething uſeful from them. I ſhall, therefore, without further apology, go on to point out, what I think have been the cauſes of the decline of trade in this kingdom, and the means to retrieve it.

I HAVE frequently heard it affirmed, that the Hindoo, or original native inhabitants of theſe provinces, were in a better ſituation with reſpect to the ſecurity of their perſons and property, before the Engliſh conquered the country, than they have been ſince. This I conſtantly denied, from being well convinced, that a genuine native Bengal tiller, or manufacturer, that is capable of judging, if left to his choice, would rather live under the government of the Engliſh, than under that of their uſurping Nabobs, which the Engliſh drove out, or their predeceſſors the Moguls. A conqueſt of Bengal! when that phraſe is applied to the Hindoo inhabitants, it is improper; to them it has been ſimply a change of maſters. Many millions of them know no difference between the Mahometans who entered their country from the north, and the Chriſtians who came from the ſouth, by the Bay of Bengal. Both have hitherto governed them by the ſame agents; both left them in quiet poſſeſſion of their religion, their cuſtoms, and

their manners. A poor ſimple inoffenſive race of tillers and manufacturers, as puſillanimous, trifling, and inſignificant, as the women and children of any other country. Conquer theſe! you never thought of it. But they had placed over them ſome ages before, by the deſcendants from that great ſoldier of fortune Tamerlane, or Timur Begg, a ſet of taſk maſters, who ſtripped them of every thing acquired by their induſtry, except a very bare ſubſiſtence. To them ſucceeded the rapacious revolting Subahs, or Nabobs, whom the Engliſh drove out. I have often lamented that Clive did not, after the battle of Plaſſey, proceed directly to the Caramnaſſa, whipping before him the motley tribe of freebooters which compoſed the Nabob's army, until he had driven the whole out of the country. I ſay I wiſh he had done this at once, becauſe his neglecting to do it then, has given cauſe to many evils ſince, which would thereby have been prevented. Such an entire change of maſters, would have been a fortunate circumſtance to the real native inhabitants of this country, as it would be eaſy to make appear: but at preſent, my time is taken up in attempting to point out remedies for the evils, which the conqueſt of the country by the Engliſh hath brought about.

When the favourites of the Mogul Princes, who had obtained appointments in theſe provinces, acquired

quired riches, they ſent it to Dellhy, or ſome remote part of the empire, together with the neat proceeds of the revenue, or carried it with them out of the country, if they were recalled. In proceſs of time, theſe officers of the Emperors, or their deſcendants, taking advantage of the confuſions in the empire, ſet up for themſelves, and became the reigning Princes of the country. The collected treaſure was then locked up in their own coffers, and not ſent out of the provinces.

During the government of the Moguls, and that of the uſurping Subahs, *the trade of the country* remained open and free to the adventurers of all nations, who entered it by the Bay of Bengal, in ſhips richly laden with ſilver and gold, which they left behind, in exchange for the wrought manufactures and raw materials, the produce of the country. From whatever ſection of the globe theſe merchant-adventurers came, they brought with them ſome bullion, as their import cargo, whatever it was, would not produce ſufficient to pay for the goods they exported. I well remember the nature of the trade to this kingdom, before the Engliſh took charge of it; and I believe I keep within the bounds of truth, when I ſay, that the balance of trade in favour of this country, which was brought to them by the Europeans, and the people poſſeſſing the territories on the eaſt and weſtern ſides of the Bay of Bengal, amounted to a

million

milliou ſterling annually, not one ounce of which was in thoſe days again exported.

Such was the ſtate of the kingdom when the Engliſh were obliged, in ſelf defence, to wage war with the uſurping Subahs, or Nabobs, whom, in the end, they drove out, and in proceſs of time, took the government into their own hands. In the ſtruggle for power, there can be no doubt, but that the natives ſuffered in perſon and property; but whether the Nabob's, or the Engliſh army, ſhould prove victorious, a very numerous majority among them would not have given three farthings; ignorant, as they then were, of the good fortune the change brought them. To plough their fields, and weave their cloth in quiet, was all they wiſhed; nor were they capable of judging under the government of which of the contending powers they ſhould be moſt at their eaſe.

Suppose a very numerous flock of ſheep, which had for ſome ages been tended by a ſmall number of ſhepherds, who, for their own intereſt, covered them tolerably well from beaſts of prey, but at the end of each year, ſtripped them quite bare of their fleece, which they ſold, and locked the money up in their own coffers?

Again: ſuppoſe that another gang of ſhepherds, from another country, and of a very different caſt,

having

having a quarrel with the old ſhepherds, attack and drive them out, ſeize their wealth, and lay claim to the ſheep; theſe laſt, though greatly inferior in number to their predeceſſors, yet excel them in every art of managing a flock, in making fences, and defending them from beaſts of prey, as well as in the arts of civilization, and acts of tenderneſs and humanity; will not the laſt ſtate of ſuch a flock, or, to drop the metaphor, ſuch a people, equally helpleſs, though not quite ſo innocent, be better than the firſt?

I MADE the above digreſſional remark, purely to ſhew, that the ſtate of the natives is exactly ſimilar to what it was before the capture, as far as it relates to their cuſtoms, uſages, civil and religious rights; for of theſe no attempts have been made to alter them; protection from foreign enemies is infinitely more ſecure; and their oppreſſions from government, I am well aſſured, much leſs.

I RETURN now to the original cauſe of the decline of foreign trade, and the reaſons why there is great ſums of money annually ſent out of the kingdom, and very little imported for the purpoſes of trade, which are the evils brought on by the conqueſt made of the country by the Engliſh, and which I wiſh to ſee remedied.

The efforts the Company had made in the late war, to maintain their acquisitions in the East Indies, had, in some measure, distressed their affairs at home: they expected, and they had a right to expect, that their investments from Bengal would be annually increased, from their new funds of wealth, without sending out in their ships, any more bullion from England. After the year 1757, they sent little or none to Bengal: nay, they ordered their servants in Bengal, to send money to Madrass and to China. The war with France prevented the ships of that nation from coming here: and about the same time, the Dutch began to be supplied on easy terms by private people, and of course imported no more money. From this period, to the war with Cossim Ally in 1763, the sums of money sent out of the kingdom, by public and private people, were immense: and the above mentioned Prince is said to have carried with him large sums in his retreat from the provinces.

Notwithstanding the vast exportation of wealth, there was yet left sufficient for a full and unimpeded circulation, for the purposes of commerce. For whether the surplus was secreted by private persons, locked up in the treasury of the Nabobs, carried off by the Mogul officers, or re-exported by the new possessors, it did not affect the welfare of the kingdom, whilst there yet remained sufficient

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for to anſwer all the purpoſes of mercantile circulation.

About the time Lord Clive returned the laſt time to India, a ſcarcity of currency was complained of at the preſidency, but not much felt in the provinces; and even this evil, ſo much talked of at Calcutta, the Engliſh ſeat of government, was removed for the preſent, by throwing into currency a number of gold mahors, of a new ſtandard and value.

It was in the beginning of the government of Mr. Vereſt, and during his adminiſtration, that the cauſes of the ruin of the export trade took place, and have increaſed annually, until ſome of the beſt branches are nearly loſt.

Lord Clive, on his return to Europe, laid ſuch flattering ſtatements of the ſituation of the Company's affairs in India before the nation, that it had much ſuch an effect on the minds of the Directors of the Company, Proprietors of Stock, and people in general, as the ſouth ſea bubble had ſome fifty years before. Dividends were increaſed; ſtock roſe; the miniſtry put in for a ſhare in the name of government; and the managers in Leadenhall-Street, uſed every means of ſtock jobbing chicanery to keep the power in their own hands. Great latitude was given in contracts for goods; and high

high freight paid for ſhips, to ſuch as could procure votes, in order to keep the then rulers of the Company in the direction of their affairs. Verelſt was called on eagerly, and for God's ſake, to ſend them ſupplies; and this gave the firſt idea of buying goods here for the Company with ready money; the moſt fatal ſtroke to the trade of this country, that could poſſibly have entered into the head of man.

Whilst every man in and out of the ſervice, at Bengal, exclaimed bitterly againſt ſending bullion out of the country, they all agreed, that the beſt mode to relieve the Company, was to increaſe the cargoes of their returning ſhips, by opening the warehouſe door for the reception of goods, to be paid for with ready money. The Company's ſtandard for goodneſs in quality, could not be attended to; for that would have ſhut out almoſt all that were offered. That line, like the line of rectitude, once forſaken, is hard to be recovered. Goods were admitted of ſo inferior a quality, that it deſtroyed the very purpoſe for which they were bought. The amount of the invoices from Bengal were increaſed; but the account ſale in Europe fell ſhort. Complaints were made; but it was too late; the evil ſpirit once admitted, introduced others more wicked than himſelf. The eagerneſs of the inhabitants to procure goods to ſell to the Company, gave cauſe to the debaſing of the manufactures

nufactures all over the kingdom. The Dutch, the French, private adventurers, dealers of all kinds, became the impatient rivals of each other. The ſhips from Europe could not return without cargoes; and the manufacturers finding a vend for their goods, however ill wrought, took leſs pains in making of them. How far the evil has ſince extended, and into what innumerable branches it has ſpread out, might be thought tedious, if not invidious, to relate. The fact is notorious and plain. I feel no pleaſure in dwelling on it, further than is neceſſary, to point out the cauſes of the decline of trade, the bad effects of which are now ſo ſeverely felt.

The Company ſoon became ſenſible of the evil tendency of the new mode of procuring goods, and after throwing the whole odium of it on their ſervants abroad, in the eyes of the nation, gave orders to revert back to the old methods of procuring their inveſtments.

I have ſaid, that though in the days of the Subahs, the people were full as much, if not more, oppreſſed, than they have been at any time ſince, yet the ſources from whence wealth flowed into the kingdom, remained open. But this could not long be the caſe after a change of maſters. The Engliſh never can aſſimilate with the natives of Bengal; it is not to the intereſt of their country

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that they ſhould. They come to ſettle in this country but for a time, and with a view to the bettering of their fortune; when that is effected, they return, and ever will return, if they live to effect the purpoſe for which they come. A European, and a Hindoo Banyan, the firſt day they meet, are as much inclined to ſerve and aſſiſt each other, as on the day they ſeparate, though they may have been maſter and ſervant for twenty years. The tie aroſe at firſt from a view to their mutual intereſt, in the moſt groſs and pecuniary ſenſe of the word. It is not poſſible they can have any other. They wrangle about accompts the firſt month of their acquaintance; they do the ſame the laſt week, perhaps day, that they are together. The European hath procured what he came for, and will ſtay no longer: the Hindoo has made the moſt of the European's courage, influence, and adventurous mercantile abilities, he poſſibly could. They part in general, with as little feeling for each other, as a travelling gueſt doth with his roadſide landlord, and take leave of each other in much the ſame language: '*Adieu, Maſter Charge-' 'well,*' ſays the European, '*your entertainment is' 'very good, but your houſe is confounded hot.*' To which the Hindoo replies, '*God bleſs your honour;' 'I hope you will recommend me to any of your friends' 'that may chance to come this way.*'

In ſuch a revolution as that mentioned above, it was impoſſible but that numbers of individuals among the conquerors, muſt have acquired large property: They did acquire it; and with it they ſeem to have obtained the deteſtation of their countrymen, and the appellation of *Nabobs* as a term of reproach. Yet they took it not from the poor ſheep above alluded to, but from their tyrannical taſk-maſters, who had forced the new comers into a war of ſelf defence, which, however, ended in driving away the former ſhepherds; after which they ſhared the ſpoil among themſelves.

It is much eaſier for their countrymen to abuſe them for ſeizing the ſpoil, than to prove, that in ſimilar circumſtances, they would not have done the ſame thing: and it is owing to mere accident, that it proved more pernicious in their hands, than in the hands of their predeceſſors in the government.

The great wealth which had for a long courſe of time flowed into Bengal, came from the weſt; unluckily the late conquerors of the country came alſo from the weſt. Poſſeſſed of ſo immenſe a treaſure, they were impatient to tranſport it to their own country, where alone they could enjoy it. Here again I am induced to form another wiſh, which, at firſt view, like that in which I lamented LordClive's not having proceeded to the entire con-

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queſt of the kingdom, immediately after the battle of Plaſſey, inſtead of making an unſubſtantial peace, wears but a very indifferent appearance; yet the evil conſequences which have flowed from its not having been put into execution, will juſtify it. I wiſh then that Lord Clive and his Council, had ſhipped off for Europe, or for China, if you like it better, every *rupee* of the wealth acquired by the *conqueſt*, or that could have been found in the country, excepting what was barely ſufficient for the purpoſes of commerce and internal circulation; or even to have ſunk it in the ſea, would have been leſs pernicious, than the evils which have enſued by the means which have been uſed to remit it to Europe.

It has been already obſerved, that ſoon after the battle of Plaſſey, the Europeans of all nations ceaſed to bring bullion with them to Bengal; letters of credit ſerved their purpoſe full as well. It was the ſame with the country ſhips; the owners and captains of which, had only to give tolerable ſecurity, that the money they took up at Bengal, ſhould, in three, four, or even five years, be ſent to Europe, to obtain what ſums they pleaſed. This facility of obtaining money on very moderate terms, gave riſe to a ſpirit of adventure, as pernicious to the manufactures of this country, as ſtock jobbing is to fair trade: innumerable ſchemers aroſe, who undertook the ſending money to Europe, by every rout through which it formerly found its way to

India,

India. These unnatural attempts to force back the stream of wealth to its fountain head, had the same effect in mercantile polity, as the attempting to force a great river, with all its supplies and acquisitions of water, after a long course of running, back through the little channel from whence it took its rise: it overwhelmed the schemers with ruin. Had it ended there, it would not have signified much; but its baneful influence extended much further. These new adventurers became rivals to the Company, and to one another. Their eagerness to buy up the manufactures of the country, raised the price, and sunk the real value: for the goods were so much debased, that though they cost more than *thirty per cent.* above what the same goods had formerly cost, yet at the markets to which they were carried, they would not produce any thing like their prime cost, and many of them would not sell at all. At this unlucky period, the kingdom was visited by that most dreadful of all calamities, a famine, which swept away, perhaps, one fourth part of the labouring people: this increased the difficulty of obtaining wrought goods, and contributed still more to the debasing of their texture, which, by its effects, almost entirely annihilated the former great and beneficial trade of white cloth, from Bengal to the Gulfs of Mocha and Persia.

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In the Aſiatic ſection of the globe, the ſilk and cotton manufactures of Bengal, which were formerly ſo famous all the world over, had now loſt their value, and were no longer ſought after: others were found out which anſwered the purpoſe full as well, and came much cheaper. Yet the European nations ſtill coveted the goods of this country. Firſt, from a jealouſy to one another; ſecondly, for the ſake of the raw materials it produced; thirdly, from their having nothing to ſubſtitute in place of the coarſe and fine cotton cloths of Bengal, which, inferior as they were, to thoſe formerly manufactured, ſtill ſold for a ſmall profit in Europe; and laſtly, the Engliſh Eaſt India Company had no other method of drawing home the tribute from their Indian ſubjects. The trade carried on in the country veſſels, inſtead of being, as formerly, in favour of Bengal, was abſolutely againſt it. I will ſelect two or three inſtances from a great number, which I could produce in proof of what I ſay, and then quit the diſagreeable ſide of the queſtion.

Before the capture of Calcutta, a ſhip of five hundred tons, belonging to Surat or Bombay, when ſhe made a voyage to Bengal, came full loaded with cotton; the proceeds of her cargo amounted to about eighty thouſand rupees; but as this was inſufficient to load her home with ſugar, ſalt petre, raw ſilk, and ſilk piece goods of various

rious kinds, ſhe either brought with her a letter of credit, the exchange on which was in favour of Bengal, or the balance in caſh.

A SHIP of the ſame dimenſions now, when ſhe has ſold her cargo of cotton, lades on board a cargo of coarſe rice, and with the balance in money, proceeds to the Coromandel coaſt, or Iſland of Ceylon, where having ſold the rice, and purchaſed dollars, ſhe goes on to Batavia for ſugar, as that article is not now to be had at Bengal, cheap and in plenty as heretofore. If ſhe proceeds home direct, the returns are made in money, rice, ſome trifling quantity of raw ſilk, and ſilk piece goods, all of which the captain, or ſupercargo, would willingly make over to any perſon, that would inſure them the difference in the exchange, between Bombay and Bengal current rupees, without other advantage of any kind, to reimburſe them for the ſhip's charges, freight, and premium on money; and this becauſe the markets of Surat and Bombay, are ſupplied with ſugar and raw ſilk, much better and cheaper from China; a very late and new diſcovery, which has aroſe from the neglect to cultivate the firſt, and in debaſing the quality of the laſt, and highly pernicious to the trade of theſe provinces: ſo that if there was not a ſale for cotton at Bengal, the trading communication between theſe two Engliſh preſidencies, would abſolutely be at an end. As to the eaſtern trade, formerly ſo

advantageous to this kingdom, it is carried on almoſt intirely by the ſcheming remittance-mongers above mentioned, under every poſſible diſadvantage. Before, and even ſince, the capture of Calcutta, the trader to the eaſtward carried with him from Bengal, rice for ballaſt, a little ſalt petre, with ſome piece goods; but Patna opium was the principal article: it was generally good, and coſt from two hundred and ſeventy-five to three hundred and fifty rupees per cheſt. This difference in the price depended on the demand abroad, not as now, an eagerneſs for remittance of property to Europe. His cargo ſold, the returns to Bengal were made in pepper, ſome little tin, cloves, dammar, and rattans, but moſtly in virgin gold, which contributed much to the enriching of this country.

Our preſent adventurers hurry out with what they call opium, for which they pay more than double the former price: piece goods are ſo debaſed they will not ſell, ſo that now they do not export any; ſalt petre is become too dear, and rice ſpoils the opium, that is what they call ſuch, for in fact it is a vile infamous compound, which in a few months dries up to powder. I mean not to indulge in myſelf the ſpirit of invective, and here once for all declare, that in my complaining, I have no particular individual in view: but I cannot omit to ſay, that I feel for the honour of my countrymen, when they ſink ſo much below the

character

character of English merchants, in the miserable arts they permit to be used, to give this adulterated stuff the appearance of opium, in order to impose on the Mallays. Tin, pepper, and other articles fit for the China market, is what they seek, which they put on board large ships, appointed to meet them in certain stations to take their cargoes, by way of remittance to China, where the proceeds are paid to the English, French, Danes, Swedes, &c. for bills on Europe.—The vessel returns to Bengal with a cargo of vile lumber.

Heretofore the European *ships*, *exclusive* of the Company's goods, brought, under the denomination of private trade, articles for sale, to the amount of, perhaps, ten thousand pounds per ship; the returns were made in different kinds of silk and cotton goods, the manufactures of Bengal. If the captain and officers had money to spare, it was deposited in the Company's cash here, and they were repaid in London. An increase of European inhabitants, and our full proportion of luxury, hath produced vend for double the quantity of those articles of private trade. The manufactures, debased as they are in quality, and raised in price, will no longer answer the purpose of the captain and officers, to carry them to Europe. The Company, I think, admit each ship to pay in about five thousand pounds into their treasury, for bills on Europe. The balance which arises on

the ſale of the private trade, imported on eight ſhips, may be eſtimated to amount annually to one hundred thouſand pounds, and this is carried out of the kingdom in caſh. It will anſwer no purpoſe to multiply particular inſtances, in proof of the great ruin which is thus advancing with quick and large ſtrides towards us. A good Engliſhman will feel ſufficient mortification in taking one general view of the deplorable difference of the ſituation in the balance of trade, as it relates to the future welfare of this great mercantile kingdom.

Twenty-five *years ago*, *veſſels*, of whatever ſize or denomination, or from whatever quarter of the globe they imported, brought with them a tribute of gold and ſilver, which they left behind on the banks of the Ganges.—What a cruel reverſe do we experience! There is not a veſſel which now trades to this port, from ſhips of the firſt magnitude and figure included, down to a paltry ſalt importing dony from the coaſt of Oriſſa, that doth not carry money out of the country.

You, Sir, who are bleſſed with the generous feelings of a noble heart, who love your country, and know its mercantile intereſts, will be but too well convinced, that I need not produce other diſagreeable inſtances to prove the truth of my poſtulatum. Here then let it reſt; I turn from it with great pleaſure to a more pleaſing taſk; for I

feel

feel as full a conviction on my mind, that the remedy is as certain, and within our reach, as that the ruin is inevitable, if the exportation of cash is permitted to be carried on for a few years longer.

Prompted by gratitude for the public good you have done, I would here willingly offer up a tribute of praise in the stile of honest panegyric, but I want language, and the necessary talents to do you justice. Besides, you enjoy a godlike pleasure in going on silently to do your duty, leaving external rewards to the justice of your country.

I set out with boldly affirming, that the genuine native inhabitants of this country, have had on the whole, their condition bettered by the late change of masters. The lower and most useful sort of them, are an inoffensive, quiet, frugal people, wedded to the soil which they cultivate, neatly and cleanly, in the stile and manner of their forefathers. They have very little knowledge of, or intercourse with, their superior lords. They increase and multiply; plant their field in due season; near unto which, under the shade of some friendly grove of trees, they erect their little huts, which are composed of mud, small sticks, straw, and mats. Simple as they are, by annual repairing, they serve them from generation to generation. From these they watch their growing harvest; and in these they spin their thread, and weave the cloth, to procure which

which ye come ſuch a diſtance from home. They render to Cæſar ſuch things as are Cæſar's, and ſleep contented with what is left them. Scorpions ſting the heart of that man who would diſturb their innocent repoſe, or make their pittance leſs! Engliſhmen will not! They durſt not do it. Oppreſſing and deſtroying the poor naked natives, and the timely ſending Nabobs to ſleep with their fathers, is mere declamation, critically introduced to ſerve the ambitious purpoſes of ſelfiſh individuals, by the wretched *Bolts*, and yet more wretched *Dow*. As to population, for which we muſt depend on the above harmleſs order of beings, I am certain it is in a much better way than in the days of their former maſters; for they are better covered from internal and external injuries. Corn grows as kindly; the ſilk worm feeds as eagerly, and ſpins as well: the earth is not more ſteril, or doth it render up its treaſures with greater reluctancy, or in leſs abundance, to its Chriſtian lords, than in the days of yore, to its Hindoo or Mahometan rulers. The barriers to the kingdom are ſo well ſecured, as to inſure peace to the provinces to as diſtant a period as you pleaſe. The ſea is your own; and there is yet remaining in the country, money ſufficient for circulation, and every purpoſe of commerce. Forgive the injuries you have received, conſign the paſt to oblivion, and boldly begin the work anew. The above, Sir, are the materials you have to work with; nor do I wiſh them put into better

better hands. But the work expected from you is great, it is arduous. The prosperity of your mother country, and the happiness of this, in a great degree depend on it. You have the talents necessary; honesty, courage, humanity, and perseverance; use them, Sir; the cause is a glorious one, in which, if you succeed, (and I have not the shadow of a doubt but that you will,) it will raise you to the point to which every noble and generous soul looks up—*honest fame.*

There is one, and but one remedy, for all our present, as well as for those evils which we apprehend will come upon us. It is the restoring, as soon as possible, not only the manufactured goods, but also the raw materials for trade, to their primitive goodness and price. You have laid the foundations on which to erect this glorious structure; the moment is favourable to go on with the building. Look down on, and leave behind you, the miserable planners of new taxes, whose parrot jargon means nothing more than raising their interest at home, by forming schemes of drawing money into the treasury, however oppressive to the farmers, manufacturers, and merchants, under the stale and worn out cant, of its being for the interest of our *honourable masters the East India Company.* It is not the Company's only, but the national interest, which is blended in, and interwoven with, the prosperity of Bengal. No narrow, wretched

wretched tide-waiter's plan, will ſuit the occaſion. It muſt be a ſcheme in which the whole legal power of the ſtate muſt be employed, and a ſteadineſs equal to your own to put it in execution.

In the reaſoning I may hold, and the hints I may give, I mean to avoid meddling, as much as poſſible, with the financing branch. I am by no means maſter of the ſubject; and if I was, to you my remarks would be uſeleſs, as I know you have abilities to form, and ſteadineſs to abide by your own plan, which hitherto hath proved ſo ſalutary, and which, with ſome few alterations, which you have now the opportunity to make, promiſes ſo well in future.

There is not in any country in the world, of which I have any knowledge, a more pernicious race of vermin in human ſhape, than are the numerous caſt of people known in Bengal by the appellation of *Sircars*; they are educated, and trained up to deceive; ſervile, mean, artful, cowardly, and ſlaviſh. Their knowledge of writing and figures, and the indolence of their maſters, induces a neceſſity of employing them; but the inſtant you delegate to them the leaſt degree of power, they are changed into tyrants the moſt unfeeling and mercileſs in the univerſe.

Soon after your acceſſion to the government, you diſlodged a neſt of theſe blood-ſuckers, and by ſo doing, gave relief to the general trade of the country, the good effects of which were immediately felt all over the kingdom. This was in aboliſhing the chowkies placed on the banks of the rivers. They were a grievous and oppreſſive burthen to the merchants who tranſported goods from one province to another. Theſe, with the tax on marriages, and ſome others ſuppreſſed ſince, employed a number of vile Sircar collectors, yet brought little into the public coffers.

There are ſtill remaining other ſuch like grievances, under the denomination of government cuſtom houſes, or inland chowkies. I wiſh the collections made at theſe, were compared with the expences for keeping them up, and the balance in favour of the ſtate, ſet againſt the hardſhips, the ſeizing, perplexities and oppreſſions, which the people in general ſuffer from the numerous band of petty collectors, who are always ſelected from the Sircars above mentioned, I dare believe you would, on a view of ſuch comparative ſtatement, aboliſh the whole. It muſt be that the people would find great relief from a general ſuppreſſion of all kinds of chowky duties. It ſhould be publiſhed in every village all the country over; nor ſhould the officers of government be permitted to levy ſuch duty under any pretence whatever. As

things are now, the *harpies* above mentioned collect *twelve per cent.* and the ſtate benefits *not one.*

I come next to the duties levied at Calcutta, on goods manufactured in the country, and thoſe expreſsly for the purpoſe of exportation, excluſive of the inland oppreſſions where the cloth is made. The government cuſtom maſter draws two and one half per cent. the Calcutta cuſtom-houſe two per cent. the fees of both offices, expence in landing, houſing for examination, and reſhipping, brings the charge up to five per cent. Can this be right? Our export trade is already extremely decayed, and will not the continuation of ſo ſevere an impoſt ſink it ſtill lower? The loading your own articles of exportation with heavy duties, is contrary to the policy obſerved by all the ſtates in Europe, who pretend to the leaſt knowledge in commercial polity.

Since you, Sir, paid off the Company's bond debt, their revenue is no longer mortgaged. Your land tax and ſalt duties, after anſwering every demand of the ſtate for the current year, leave you a large annual balance: you therefore do not want the money ariſing from theſe injudicious taxes. But admitting that you do want it, lay it additionally on the imports, all of which, except the article of cotton, had better be burthened than the manufactures of the kingdom, on a great and free exportation of which our whole depends.

We

We are certain great part of our export trade is loſt. We can give a tolerable gueſs from what accidents it has been loſt. The evil daily grows upon us. Attempts muſt be made to check this evil. But as no man can ſay that his particular plan will anſwer the intended purpoſe better than that of his neighbour, it behoves the wiſdom of government to attend to every thing which is offered. It coſts them nothing; Nor is there any ſcheme ſo ærial, but ſomething uſeful may be extracted from it. The invention of the brazen bull made it clear to the tyrant, that the maker was a horrid monſter, unworthy to live: Schemes to lay taxes, and grind the face of the poor, are eaſy to plan—There are five hundred *Empſon's* and *Dudley's* to one *Colbert*. You, Sir, I am confident, wiſh to fill the national ſpunge, until its commerce flows again in the natural channel. If I prove ſo happy as to contribute one ſingle idea towards it, I ſhall feel my reward; for I love my country, and am intereſted in the welfare of every branch of the Britiſh empire.

I have been aſſured by a perſon well verſed in the revenue department, that the collections have, ſince your acceſſion, been put on ſo certain a footing, that with the leaſt economy in the civil and military departments, there will remain at the end of each year, a balance in the treaſury of one hundred and twenty lacks of rupees.

I have

I have alſo heard that it is a reſolution of government, that one hundred lacks of this treaſure, ſhall be ſet aſide as a ſacred fund, not to be touched but in caſes of extreme neceſſity; and that the ſurplus of each ſucceeding year, after deducting about eighty lacks for the purpoſes of the Company's inveſtment, ſhall be ſhipped off, as hath been the caſe this year, to ſupply the Company's ſettlements at Bombay and China.

Did the export trade of the kingdom flouriſh as it formerly did, and bullion, though in a much ſmaller proportion, flow in from all quarters, as before the conqueſt, a large ſum of money being every year locked up in your ſeparate fund, and ample ſupplies ſent annually to other ſettlements, it would not ſignify much. But as it is but too evident, that the very reverſe of this is the caſe, is it not to be feared, that ſuch locking up with one hand, and ſending abroad with the other, will but too ſoon cramp the general circulation in all the provinces, and render it impoſſible for the farmers to pay their rents? Can it be neceſſary for me to repeat here, that the Company's ſhips carry out every year, more private property in gold and ſilver, than the Company in any period of time imported? Providence, for wiſe purpoſes, which muſt be evident to every reflecting perſon, has denied to this country, mines of the precious metal, which, in various ſhapes, ſerve the inhabitants of the whole globe for ſigns in trade.

A man

A MAN of a ſtudious and pious turn of thinking, finds his gratitude raiſed, and his ſoul refreſhed, in contemplating the goodneſs of God, in the diſpoſal of what man eagerly ſeeks after in all quarters of the world, as the good things of this life. He views with wonder and aſtoniſhment, the Spaniard and Portugueze, toiling on both ſides the great ſouthern continent, in the weſtern world, in queſt of ſilver and gold, which as ſoon as they have obtained, they fly with it to the northern hemiſphere, where, with equal avidity, it is ſnatched from them, by the Engliſh, Dutch, and French, and tranſported with ſtill more toil, and at greater riſk of health and life, to the extremes of the eaſtern world, and there bartered away for the produce of thoſe diſtant countries; while the Indian, with ſtill greater avidity and eagerneſs than the former poſſeſſors, commits the glittering ſpoil, once more, to coffers, cheſts, or into holes and corners of the earth.

THE legiſlator will note theſe providential arrangements as well as the philoſopher, and if he is wiſe, and deſerves the appellation of good, he will ſtudy, and draw benefit from a knowledge of, but never attempt to counteract them, and will reſtrain ſuch abuſe in individuals, by every legal mode which wiſdom can deviſe.

AFTER

After the ſevere drainings to which theſe provinces have been ſubject for near twenty years, I much fear we cannot ſpare ſo large a ſum as one hundred lacks, to be taken out from our poor remaining ſtock of currency: I alſo think it unneceſſary. The great army you keep on foot, the credit of your arms, and the extreme debilitated and diſtracted ſtate of all the powers of Hindooſtan, from whoſe ſituation an invaſion of theſe provinces can be apprehended, ſecures you for many years againſt even the fear of an attack on the land ſide; nor will it (except we fall a ſleep, and invite them to it) be poſſible for the French to collect a force at the Iſlands of France, with which to attack you, without your knowing of it time enough to fruſtrate ſuch an attempt, either from Europe or in India; and by no other means, or from any other quarter, can you be diſturbed. Your fund will, therefore, be a means only to accelerate our dreaded diſtreſs, without being of uſe. Or ſhould you be induced by your apprehenſions in any future time, to think ſuch a ſtock of caſh in hand neceſſary, I boldly affirm, that by offering the Company's ſecurity, in bonds bearing an annual intereſt of ſix per cent. redeemable at will, you might collect into your treaſury, at a ſhort warning, great part of the private caſh in the kingdom.

The Company's annual income here, has been fixed to a tolerable degree of certainty; and though the

the civil and military disbursements have been reduced greatly since your accession, yet now you have again the power in your hands, there is still room enough left for further curtailings and savings in both these departments. The money that can be saved, must neither be sent out of the country, nor locked up in coffers, but thrown back into circulation as soon as possible, after it comes to your hands.

I BELIEVE the Company's annual indents for goods of the produce of Bengal, amount to one third more than the quantity that has hitherto been sent home to them. It has been said, that there was neither money to pay for, nor goods to be had, to such an amount. I affirm, on the contrary, that the means are in your hands to furnish both, without the least oppression, and by the most salutary ways imaginable; and that by the year in which the Company's charter will expire, the great purposes undermentioned will be fully answered, may be clearly made to appear.

First. The Company's debts will be entirely paid off at home and abroad.

Secondly. The private property now in Bengal, and what shall in future be acquired, shall have an easy and equitable channel of remittance to Europe, by means of bills on the Company.

Thirdly.

Thirdly. That the French, Dutch, and other European nations who trade to Bengal, must, as heretofore, bring with them bullion, to pay for the largest part of their cargoes, or find it not possible to trade to this kingdom at all.

Fourthly. That the Company's settlements of Bombay and Bencoolen, may be supplied with proper and saleable goods in sufficient quantities, to prevent the necessity of sending out of the current specie, which has been, and continues to be, so very injurious to this country.

I am very sensible that such an apparent alteration in the general plan of conducting the Company's affairs, will require their sanction to give it permanency: but as the experiment may be tried without any additional expence, under the conduct of their present set of servants, I see no objection they can have to it, as no possible evil can arise from the trial.

The board of trade must be called upon, to lay before the superior council, estimates of the quantities of goods of each particular sort indented for by the Company, which can be provided at the chiefships, and different aurungs, under their management, in the course of one year, with their prices

prices ſet oppoſite to each article, as well as the full length, breadth, quality, and fineneſs, agreeable to muſters given in by the Company's ſorters.

THAT at the ſame time they aſcertain the ſums of money which will be neceſſary for them to have, ſpecifying in what parts of the kingdom it will be wanting, and the ſeaſons of the year it will be proper for them to have the money, dividing it into two, or, if poſſible, into three equidiſtant periods of time, and the number of annoes, or ſixteenth parts, of the whole that will be wanting at each of the different aurungs or chiefships.

THAT the Company's covenanted ſervants of all ranks, who are employed in the mercantile department, and who ſhall be deemed by the board of trade to be competent judges of the goods which they offer to provide, ſhall be permitted, under the regulation hereafter to be mentioned, to engage in contract with the Company.

THAT the form of the contracts be as ſimple and plain as poſſible, drawn up by the Company's ſolicitor, and have the ſanction of the ſupreme court of judicature.

THAT there be three principal contractors, whether Europeans, natives, or both, bound jointly, and ſeparately, in every engagement: and in order

to prevent their engaging for more than they can provide, it ſhall be an invariable rule, that a failure in contract, ſhall preclude the perſon ſo failing, from ever being admitted to contract with the Company in future.

THE cloth to be ſtamped in one corner of each end with a die, on which the names, or initial letters, of the contractors who delivered in the cloth, be engraved, and on one ſide of it, the name of the ſorter who paſſed it. Liſts of the names of the contractors, with remarks on their conduct as Company's merchants, be tranſmitted, by the firſt and laſt ſhips of every ſeaſon, to the Company.

THAT impoſts and duties on cloth, whether of ſilk or cotton, of every ſpecies and kind whatever, be totally aboliſhed. That all Rajahs, Zemindars, and every kind and ſpecies of officers under the government, be prohibited, in the moſt expreſs terms, from exacting any kind of tax on the weavers and makers of ſilk or cotton cloth, ſilk winders, or ſpinners of thread.

THAT a warehouſe be opened in Calcutta, under ſome ſuch denomination as the Company's ready money ſorting godown, and this under the inſpection of a committee, compoſed of three members of the board of trade, the export warehouſekeeper, his deputy, and the Company's cloth-ſorter for the time

time being, reſiding in Calcutta, where the Company's ſtandard muſters of every kind of goods in which they deal, be depoſited, and a book kept, in which be entered the contract rates that the Company pay for each particular ſort. That on a proper application to this committee, any perſon, whether European or native, be permitted to bring any goods of their own, which ſhall be compared with the Company's, and if equal in all reſpects, and the owners requeſt it, the qualifying ſorting ſtamp of the committee ſhall be put, and he, or they, be permitted to have extracts from the book of rates, in order, if they wiſh to provide ready money goods at their own riſk and expence, they may have every aſſiſtance poſſible to direct them.

THAT the board of trade be no otherways limited in the quantity of goods to be contracted for, and bought with ready money, than by the Company's annual indent: as it is to be ſuppoſed, they will increaſe their indents, when they find goods are to be had.

THIS committee ſhould advertiſe, that they will ſit ſo many days in a week all the year round, to receive ſuch goods as may be tendered, not leſs in quantity than one hundred pieces of a ſort, and every way equal to the Company's muſters of the ſame kind, and pay for them in ready money, or in notes on the treaſury.

It will alſo be neceſſary to make inveſtments for the markets in India, and for the following reaſons.

It has been noticed already, that the eagerneſs of individuals to tranſmit to Europe their ſuddenly acquired and immenſe wealth, contributed more than any other cauſe, to the raiſing the price, and lowering the goodneſs, of the principal manufactured goods of Bengal.

When the Engliſh, Dutch, and French demands of caſh for the year were ſupplied; when the ſchemers of ſending goods to Europe, on Portugueze, Daniſh, and French bottoms, failed; when, by accounts from conſtituents in England, it was known that there was a great loſs on diamonds, and that gold and ſilver fell greatly ſhort at home, of its eſtimated value in India, new methods were to be found out for tranſmitting money to Europe. Men, unacquainted with commerce, were eaſily made to believe, that the manufactures of Bengal, ſold well at all the ports in India; and provided they could but tranſport their money, without loſs, to Buſſorah, Surat, Bombay, Bencoolen, Madraſs, China, in ſhort, almoſt any where out of Bengal, it would not be difficult, from thoſe diſtant places, to tranſmit it to Europe, without the heavy diſcount to which all the other modes were ſubject. This glimmering of hope ſet the buſy ones to work, and when once the contagion took place,

place, it ſpread like wild fire. *Rich chiefs of provinces, collectors of the revenue, ſalt agents, fortunate ſoldiers, lawyers, doctors, taylors, barbers, and undertakers; all! all! became, or employed, ſupercargoes and export merchants!*

This rich, ſpirited, but inexperienced corps, joining themſelves to the commercial line, increaſed the demand for all ſorts of goods. Unluckily for the manufactures of this kindom, theſe ſudden and unexpected demands, produced the ſame effects which they ever have, and ever will produce, a general debaſing of the quality of the goods ſo eagerly ſought after. The advantageous terms on which the foreign companies obtained money, induced them to enlarge their homeward bound cargoes. Our Company was ſtraining every nerve, to do the ſame thing at the ſame time. All this combining did abſolutely, in the ſpace of four or five years, raiſe the price of the manufactures of Bengal, one with the other, full *thirty per cent.* above the former prices; at the ſame time it ſunk the goods more than *twenty per cent.* in their real intrinſic value. I could deſcend to ſuch particular inſtances in ſupport of the above aſſertions, that would but too well convince the moſt ſtubborn Sceptic at a diſtance, of their being true.. We who are on the ſpot, eaſily believe what we ſo ſeverely feel. There is not even the ſhadow of a doubt remaining, that ſhould our Europe and country ſhips, contintue to

carry

carry out money in the manner they have done, and now do, that a very few years more will drain off ſo much of our current ſpecie, as to cauſe a ſtagnation in the circulation in ſome parts of the kingdom. No matter where it begins; it will bring on a mortification in that part, that will endanger the whole body.

THE relief that you, Sir, formerly gave, by preventing money being ſent out of the provinces, to pay the troops ſtationed in the Nabob of *Oude's* dominions, has, undoubtedly, poſtponed our fate for ſome years. The great ſavings you made, the firſt two years after your acceſſion, in the civil, military, and marine departments, have proved refreſhing and warm cordials to the drooping ſpirits of the government; and had you not been interrupted, you might by this time, have done great things towards the revival of the export trade: But, Sir, it languiſhes cruelly yet; nor will it ever recover, but by bringing back the manufactures to their primitive goodneſs and price.

SOME very ſpirited and enterpriſing efforts have been made to recover the trade of the Gulfs, by private perſons under your own patronage, but hitherto without effect. The Minerva failed at Suez the former year; the Alexander at Juddah, laſt year; I wiſh her better fortune at Suez, this year. Their cargoes were made up of goods manufactur-

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ed in Bengal, and were called in the invoice by their proper names, but the cloth was badly fabricated, and the prices too high. The merchant-adventurers from this port, came home dispirited; and foreigners will have nothing to do with your silk or cotton cloth, for the ports in India.

In this general decay of trade, and despondency of private adventurers, what is to be our remedy? Why really, Sir, all your efforts, at the expence of your private fortune, will not do. The state must interpose; and if you undertake to recommend or manage it, something yet may be done. Throw not this poor production aside, until you find a better. You stand pledged to the English nation, for recovering the affairs of Bengal. They look to you for relief: You must not disappoint them.

The Governor and Council of Bombay must be written to, to send round musters of such kinds of silk, and silk piece goods, of the manufacture of Bengal, as will serve the market of Surat and Bombay, together with an estimate of their value at those ports, and the quantities which they will be able to sell annually of each sort: These must be provided at least to such amount, as will answer the demand. Bombay will have on Bengal for their annual supplies. Some sugar and salt petre may also be sent. Let them have proper goods

to

to ſell, and they will never want circulating currency. But it will be to the utmoſt degree of folly indiſcreet, to continue ſending away your own ſpecie to ſupply their wants.

An inveſtment of proper goods for Buſſorah, amounting to four lacks of rupees, for Mocha of three lacks, and one of ten lacks for Suez, ſhould be provided. There is not the leaſt doubt, but if theſe goods could be had, wrought up to their primitive goodneſs, and nearly at the prices paid for them about the year 1750, but they would anſwer every expence of ſending, and produce returns in bullion, with an advanced gain, clear of every mercantile charge, of at leaſt *twelve* to *fifteen per cent.* This money, or ſuch part of it as was abſolutely neceſſary for China, might be ſent there in caſh, or cotton, from Bombay; and I am certain that the markets on that ſide of India, would take off more well wrought Bengal goods, than would ſupply money for all their demands of caſh at Bombay; leaving the returns from the Gulf, to be brought back to Bengal, or ſent to China, as moſt neceſſary; which return, I have a confidence, might be increaſed in a few years, by proper management, to *thirty lacks of rupees annually.*

The ſettlement of Bencoolen, though very advantageous to the Company in their pepper trade, cannot exiſt without an annual ſupply of ſilver.

Gold

Gold being the produce of the country, they have no currency in that metal; and the inhabitants being in continual want of many even of the necessaries of life, they send for them to Batavia, which port hath hitherto drained them of all their silver: It would be better that the Company supply them from home, than permit them to drain more specie from Bengal. But as they often use the mode of bartering goods in exchange for their pepper, would it not be as well that they send indents and musters of such goods as they can use in barter, and have them supplied every year? These goods should be provided in the manner of the other investments, and a charge of *fifteen per cent.* put at the foot of the invoice, in which the opium they want for the use of the west coast, should be included, and an offer made of them to the Company's servants at that price. I believe these indents would run up to near three lacks of rupees annually. I will give you my reasons for this opinion hereafter, and conclude these rough outlines of the plan by observing, that there are many other little drains, which may be stopped by means similar to the above.

I AM not one of those desponding beings who think the kingdom ruined; I know the contrary. I know that the wealth of this happily situated country is inexhaustible; but it lays below the surface of the earth. Continue to cover your subjects

jects from tyranny and oppreſſion, and they will draw it out, and work it up, ready for your uſe.

Our evils felt and apprehended, have ariſen from accidental cauſes, to which we did not advert, until we felt the effects: They are now known, and may be removed by a proper application of the means in our hands.

I will ſuppoſe that all has been done, or is now in hand to be done, which is neceſſary or eligible, in the legiſlative, financing, and political lines. If this be the caſe, you have no immediate uſe for your military powers. Let the ſword reſt in the ſcabbard, (with a proper attention to diſcipline, it will not ruſt,) while you once more look back to your firſt principles. A view to the advantages of commerce, drew the ſubjects of Great Britain into this country. Its intereſt hath been to long neglected: Take it up anew, and you will ſoon reſtore every thing to that ſtate, to which the mercantile intereſt of this kingdom muſt be brought back, or all your victories, your politics, and your plans of juriſprudence, will avail nothing.

The Company are out of debt here: and ſome men of good calculating abilities have affirmed, that if the preſidency of Bengal continued to ſend home annually, an inveſtment of eighty lacks of rupees, the Company would be diſencumbered of all

all their difficulties in Europe, before their charter will be out. That an interruption hath been given to your meaſures, and thereby to an annual increaſe of ſuch remittance, is to be lamented. It cannot be recalled; but you may again ſet the wheels a going, and ſpin the thread anew. Inſtead of eighty, ſend the Company home one hundred and twenty lacks of rupees in the goods they indent for, until they have ſtock in hand, above what is neceſſary to pay their debts, their current charges, and the dividends on the capital ſtock. They cannot permit you to draw on them for money: Increaſe the inveſtment as much as poſſible, and that impediment will be removed, and with it every evil we now feel or apprehend.

If (as I have heard) your ſavings amount to one crore, or hundred lacks of rupees, annually, it is twenty lacks more than what is wanting for the current ſervice, including the Company's inveſtment. This ſurplus will anſwer the purpoſe of buying goods for ſupplying the Company's other ſettlements, in the manner above propoſed, without ſending a rupee out of the country.

But yet we want forty lacks of rupees, to increaſe the Company's inveſtment to one hundred and twenty, in order to enable them to bear being drawn on for four hundred thouſand pounds annually, by which means we ſhall turn the current

of

of private remittance into our own channel, and oblige the other European nations, to bring in ſilver to pay for their homeward bound cargoes, or ceaſe to come here; as alſo to put a final ſtop to the pernicious cuſtom of ſending out bad manufactured goods, which hath brought the trade of Bengal, into ſo ill repute with the people in Aſia.

LET ſubſcription books be opened at the treaſury, for the receipts of forty lacks of rupees, on the following conditions.

THE Company to receive the current rupee at two ſhillings ſterling, and give a receipt for the ſame, payable in London, at the expiration of one thouſand two hundred days from the date, with a ſimple uncompounding intereſt of three per cent. per annum.

No perſon to be permitted, either in his own name, or that of a conſtituent, to ſubſcribe for more than ſixty thouſand current rupees for the firſt year, which ſhall be paid into the treaſury at three diſtant periods, and in the equal ſums of twenty thouſand rupees at each payment.

SHOULD the whole not be ſubſcribed the firſt month after the books are opened, perſons who ſubſcribed for ſixty thouſand at firſt, ſhall have permiſſion to add what further ſums they chooſe, until the forty lacks are completed.

I HAVE

I HAVE eſtimated the annual receipts, at twenty lacks above what is wanting for the immediate and current uſe of government, and for the Europe inveſtment at eighty, as it now ſtands, which twenty lacks I propoſe to apply to the purchaſing of goods for the Gulfs and Bencoolen, for the purpoſe of keeping alive the export Indian trade, and the ſupplying the Company's foreign ſettlements: Not that I think it the whole ſurplus of each year. Indeed I have been told, that ſhould things continue quiet for five years, and the annual ſurplus be put to no uſe, that moſt of the current ſpecie of the kingdom, would be accumulated into the Company's coffers. If this is really the caſe, why not at once aboliſh the heavy and unnatural weight of taxes on your own articles of export?

No errors in the above reaſoning, ought to be employed as arguments in oppoſition to forming ſome plan for reviving the trade of this port. The writer by no means offers this as a perfect one. If it ſuggeſts to you, or to the Company, a ſingle thought that may be uſeful to this country, and of conſequence to Great Britain, he will think himſelf amply rewarded. He is not in the ſervice, therefore cannot draw pecuniary benefit from its being adopted, or more than his ſhare of the inconvenience, as a ſingle ſubject, in its being overlooked or neglected. He cannot write for fame; for he owns himſelf deficient in every talent requi-

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ſite for a writer, whoſe plan may come to be canvaſſed in public, but that of ſpeaking truth, drawing his materials from his own obſervation and experience, and his ideas (ſuch as they are) from his own head. He is even incapable of arranging them in any tolerable degree of order. In ſhort, he knows nothing. But that he feels great mortification at ſeeing the credit of the manufactured goods of this kingdom decline ſo faſt, and moſt ſincerely wiſhes to have them reſtored to their primitive texture and goodneſs.

From the long internal peace which this country hath enjoyed; from the apparent certainty of its continuing for a courſe of years, in its preſent happy ſtate of repoſe; from the increaſing ſtate of the revenue, by which the Company have been made eaſy in their circumſtances; from the facility with which you may raiſe money to ſupply ſuch a plan; from the advantage ſuch an increaſe of the Company's home inveſtment to one third more, will bring to my country, in her preſent untoward ſituation with her colonies; from the general ſatiſfaction and content it will give the gentlemen in Europe, who depend for ſubſiſtence on their money in India, when they ſee a door opened for its coming home, on ſafe and equitable terms; from the certainty I am in, that ſuch a plan, properly ſupported, will oblige our rivals in the Indian trade, to bring us ſilver in exchange for our goods,

or,

or, which will do full as well, abſent themſelves entirely; from the eaſe with which this ſcheme may be attempted, without any material riſk or conſiderable expence; from the impoſſibility of the trade of private adventurers providing a remedy, and the neceſſity of a public interpoſition; and above all, from the conveniency of the time to attempt it in; I wiſh to ſee ſome ſuch plan, or a better, if it can be found, tried without delay.

In all I have ſaid, I have carefully avoided giving any offence. I do not mean to give any in what I have yet to ſay. Cavilling and finding fault, is the province of mock patriots, diſcarded or would-be ſtateſmen. If I mention what I think an error in management, it is purely to introduce what appears to me a better mode to be adopted in future, and not to reflect on the managers. I wiſh to ſee the French, Dutch, Danes, &c. obliged, by good honeſt mercantile policy, to bring money, or give up their trade in theſe provinces. On ſuch principles, and in ſuch an open and fair way, I would leſſen their trade hither all I could.

The ſhips the Company ſend yearly for their eighty lacks of goods, are ſo filled with trade, public and private, military ſtores for Madraſs and this place, that they cannot by any means, bring with them marine ſtores ſufficient to ſupply the country ſhips. The French draw great advantage from

from this. Now if you increaſe your inveſtment one third, you want a third more tonnage. And ſhould the Company object to your taking ſo much money for bills on them, let them ſend one third of it out in marine ſtores: The ſales will be certain: for our rivals, without having much to do with the country ſhips, import and ſell to the Engliſh, full as much as I mention. I would inſert a liſt of the articles which they import, and we want, but the cuſtom-houſe book can inform you better, or I am miſtaken.

If the Court of Directors ſay, we want no more cloth, nor will we take up any more ſhips, I beg your permiſſion, Sir, to addreſs a few words to them before I conclude this letter, as I really mean all this in good part, and have no other mode of introduction to them.

HONORABLE SIR and SIRS:

IF you increaſe your inveſtment from Bengal one third, on the eaſy terms I propoſe, you will prevent the French getting money from private perſons here, whilſt you will ſaddle them with additional riſk and expence, oblige them to bring ſilver, and at the ſame time enable yourſelves to underſell them at home. You will diſable them ſtill more,

more, by ſending us marine ſtores. But if neither of theſe propoſals meet your approbation, pray attend to what follows.

My meaning is not to offend you. I only wiſh to circumvent Monſieur in what he is doing to the prejudice of our nation; trading here to our diſadvantage. You muſt, in future, ſend at leaſt eight ſhips annually to Bengal. You allow eighty tons of kentledge to each ſhip, for which you pay freight, on an average, at the rate of twenty-five pounds per ton, and that on ſix hundred and forty tons, comes to ſixteen thouſand pounds ſterling. Order the captains to land their kentledge, and ſend them on board the ſame dead weight in anchors, grapnels, ſmall guns, three and four pounders, with ſhot, for the country ſhips, and complete the tonnage with bar iron. You will gain ten thouſand pounds by theſe articles, and Monſieur may keep his to himſelf. Order home by each ſhip, in lieu of the kentledge, an addition of one thouſand bags of ſalt petre, and ſell it for what it will fetch in Europe. It coſts you very little here. It will prevent your rivals from carrying home ſo much as they do in times of peace, and in time of war. Order the ſalt petre warehouſe at Patna, to be locked up to all but yourſelves. If your captains ſay they cannot ſhift, or navigate their ſhips, but with kentledge, tell them it is a miſtake, which has its foundation in prejudice ariſing

 from

from long practice. I have been owner of six of those ships, after they had served their time out with you, and the first thing I did, after I bought them, was to sell their kentledge. The ship swam in the Indian Seas very well without it. The same weight of salt petre, will answer the purpose just as well. Should a ship by accident, be kept in India a season or two, to render any particular service, here are old condemned guns enough, which she may have for kentledge, until she be loaded for Europe.

This kingdom, Gentlemen, is very populous, rich in native articles of trade, and wants only a continuance of what it now enjoys, good government. It is all your own; you may mould it as you please. Britain, and Britain only, can defend it; and in return, it will send you annually, a very ample tribute of well wrought goods, sufficient to supply all the nations of Europe; and in so doing, it must be your own fault, if you have rivals in trade to this country much longer.

I am,

HONOURABLE SIR and SIRS,

&c. &c.

ARGUMENTS to prove the neceſſity of an interpoſition of the ſtate, to ſupply a remedy whilſt yet in its power, croud ſo faſt into my mind, that were I to introduce the half of them, they would ſwell this addreſs to an enormous ſize; nor can I think they will be neceſſary. When duty and intereſt draw the ſame way, other inducements are ſeldom wanting to put men in action. If ever an individual and a national duty, and an individual and national intereſt, were combined together, they are in this inſtance. Paſt miſtakes, at home and abroad, ſhould be forgotten; and the whole body of Eaſt India Proprietors, Directors, and their ſervants abroad, join in one public ſpirited reſolution, to relieve theſe provinces, by a reſtoration of their trade to its former ſplendor.

IT doth Colonel Dow great honour, that the legiſlative powers of his country, in forming the late Act of Parliament for regulating the affairs of the Eaſt India Company, ſeem to have taken many hints from his third volume. But was I in the Colonel's ſituation, the pleaſure I ſhould receive from that, would not by any means counterpoiſe the pain I ſhould feel, on reflecting that I had, by that work, contributed extremely, and very unjuſtly, to fix in the minds of my fellow ſubjects, a rooted deteſtation to their countrymen, who have been ſerving the Company in this country. In the digreſſive parts of his Hiſtory of Hindooſtan, there

are many insinuations (but not one well authenticated fact) which convey ideas to the mind much to their prejudice. He is now in the command of a very important fortress on the frontier of the Bahar province. I have heard that the commanding officer on that station, may make a very handsome fortune in a few years. Nothing could convey to the Colonel's mind, a truer idea of the barbarity of the insinuations which are to be found in plenty in his books, than my hinting in this place, that the means used for making the fortune above mentioned, are oppressive to the people under his command, by obliging them to purchase their daily provision at a market, where no person can sell any thing, except such as are licensed so to do by himself. But I dislike such indirect means of filling a book with insinuations and allusions; it is involving the just and the unjust indiscriminately, in one general ruin. There is, I think, a better and more generous way of telling stories to the public, and that is in plain English, and just as they happened; in which mode I will relate one or two, and then conclude this Letter.

At the time Dow's History first reached India, an English gentleman at the court of the Vizier *Sujah ul Dowlah*, explained to that Prince, the character Colonel Dow had drawn of him in his History of Hindoostan. The Prince at first looked serious, but soon recovering himself, laughed very heartily,

heartily, and told the gentleman, that he in some measure deserved the character which Dow had given of him: "*For knowing, as I did,*" said he, "*that he was a Writer of History, I should not have* "*refused him the grant of some Salt Petre Farms in* "*my Country, which he applied to me for.*"

Mahommed Reza Cawn did not keep his temper quite so well in a similar situation; for on his being told what a figure he made in Dow's book, "*This,*" exclaimed the Nabob, "*is ungrateful and* "*intolerable. When that man was first introduced to* "*me, I was informed that he was an ingenious person.* "*I received him as a friend of the gentleman who had* "*recommended him, and, as is our country custom,* "*made him a handsome present, to oblige that gentle-* "*man, who was also a friend of mine. But had I* "*known that he was a drawer of characters, I most* "*certainly would have come up to his price, and have* "*had a good one; it would have cost him no more* "*trouble; and for the matter of fact, he is just as* "*good a judge of one as the other.*

LETTER II.

LETTER II.

FROM A

FREE MERCHANT in BENGAL,

TO

WARREN HASTINGS, *Esq.*

HONOURABLE SIR;

WHETHER, as your enemies hope and believe, a veſſel is now on her way from Europe with diſpatches, containing your recall, agreeable to the reſolution of a myſterious majority of a Court of Directors, held in May laſt, or that the Proprietors of Eaſt India Stock, have reſolution and virtue ſufficient, to abide by their reaſonable determination, of having you heard in your own defence, before they conſent to your condemnation, I know not; nor would a knowledge of the fact, either way, encourage me to go on, or deter me from continuing to addreſs theſe letters to you; for

for there is nothing in them, but what pertains equally to every British subject; and your name is placed at their head, as being, from your long experience, intense application, and great abilities, the best, though not the only judge, of the matters they contain.

To secure and increase the commercial connection between Great Britain and her Asiatic possessions, is a matter of such importance to the welfare of the kingdom, that it becomes the duty of every individual Englishman, who can throw new light on so interesting a subject, to do it in the best manner he can. In my former Letter, I pointed out some of the causes of the decline of the export trade of Bengal, and gave you a few hints relative to the means which, I think, would conduce most to the recovery of it. In the present Letter, I shall treat of the trade of India more generally, and attempt to point out how it may be better connected than it is at present, with a view to national utility. That the articles of raw silk, muslins, white and printed cotton cloths, and salt petre, may be procured at Bengal, in as great quantities as the Company shall find vend for in Europe, is an undoubted fact. It is also indisputably true, that the surplus of the teritorial revenue, the private property of persons who acquire fortunes in the Company's service, and are willing to pay their money into the public cash on easy terms, for Bills on Europe,

together

together with the ſales of the Britiſh cloth, copper, iron, and marine ſtores, which the Company do, and always muſt ſend out, will produce a fund ſufficient to pay for them, without draining the Engliſh nation of one ounce of her bullion.

THAT the Eaſt India trade muſt be conducted by a company of merchants, with excluſive rights and priviledges, I take for granted; but that this company ſhould have intereſts ſubverſive of, or running counter to the general intereſt of the ſtate, is ridiculous to ſuppoſe, and folly to aſſert. The great principle of their conſtitution is, that as many of their fellow ſubjects as poſſible, ſhall benefit by the inſtitution of ſuch a ſociety; and as few as poſſible, receive damage or hurt therefrom. It muſt be for the intereſt of the ſtate, that every diſcovery, tending to enlarge, connect, and ſecure the trade to Aſia, ſhould be made public. It cannot, therefore, be for the true intereſt of the Company, that ſuch diſcovery ſhould be kept private: yet in writing with the freedom which every man muſt do, who hopes to do good by what he writes, he lays himſelf open to the reſentment of the Company and their officers. This jealouſy of the Eaſt India Company, which ſo ſtrongly prevailed at home and abroad, until the paſſing of the late Act of Parliament for regulating their affairs, contributed extremely to the keeping the nation in the dark, as to the true ſtate of the national traffic to Aſia, and

was

was the principal cauſe of the eſtabliſhed averſion, which the people in general have conceived againſt their fellow ſubjects who have acted in Aſia. If a ſervant of the Company, wrote his private ſentiments on the ſtate of affairs abroad, or blamed in any ſhape the management at home, and this was diſcovered by the indiſcretion of his friend, or by his letter being intercepted, which was in the power of the Company, and their ſervants both abroad and at home, the perſon ſo writing was diſmiſſed the ſervice. If a perſon, not in the Company's employ, was found guilty of this horrid crime, againſt the reigning deſpot and his divan in Leadenhall-Street, the protection of the Company was withdrawn, and the culprit purſued by their reſentment, until he left the country from pure neceſſity.

Sir G. Colebrooke was the laſt of thoſe narrow minded deſpots, whoſe miſerable management brought ruin on the Company, and diſgrace on the nation. How was it poſſible that the affairs of a great and powerful ſtate, as by their poſſeſſions in Aſia, the Eaſt India Company had inſenſibly become, ſhould be conducted with ſucceſs, on a paltry, ſtock-jobbing, 'Change-Alley plan? The whole of their police was to keep the nation in the dark; to feed their veteran band of annual voters, with favourable jobs and contracts; and to amuſe the Proprietary in general, with pro-

miſes

miſes of dividends which they were unable to make good; and in the end, to abuſe the nation with frightful tales of the rapacious management of their ſervants abroad, on whoſe pretended avaricious peculation, they laid the whole blame of their own miſconduct.

The door is now opened, by which the nation may have true information as to the real nature and ſtate of its trade to Aſia. Though there is yet a portion of the old ſelfiſh, ſour, jealous leaven, in and about the heads and hearts of the managers in Leadenhall-Street, which will ferment at the idea of an individual preſuming to treat on Aſiatic mercantile affairs, which ſo few of them underſtand; and was I not ſo entirely diveſted of all hopes and fears, as I really am, with reſpect to their ſmiles or frowns, I ſhould, perhaps, be deterred, by one or other of thoſe ſlaviſh paſſions, from writing my ſentiments with the freedom of an Engliſhman. This is not a declaration of war, it is only to beſpeak peace. I ſhall avoid to mention the names of individuals, but of ſuch whoſe general conduct is well known to have deſerved national honour, or national contempt, and theſe I deem legal game, and ſhall cry them up, or hunt them down, as they occaſionally come in my way. If the word conqueſt, cauſes the idea of that demi-god *Clive*, covered over with laurels, adding the Aſiatic continent to the Britiſh empire, to ruſh into my mind, or the unclaſſical

word

word *jobbing*, drags there the paltry Knight, arrayed in a bob wig and garb of a broker, pedling away rich provinces, in ſome dark alley near the Royal Exchange, it will be all one to me; I ſhall do juſtice to both, without fear of, or partiality to, any man, or body of men. I addreſs to the name of *Haſtings* without his knowledge; but that is to draw the attention of the public, to whom, in fact, I write, and at whoſe tribunal I wiſh to be tried.

THERE are many well meaning men, and good citizens, who think that the government ſhould take the opportunity of the Company's charter being nearly out, to lay the trade to the Eaſt Indies entirely open. At no period of time has this notion been a juſt one, as it relates to national mercantile proſperity. The trade to this diſtant country, never can be carried on with advantage to the public, but by an incorporated body, with conſiderable excluſive priviledges, and a very capital ſtock, to enable them to maintain and ſupport large factories in the different provinces of the Mogul empire. Theſe factories having one common intereſt in view, contribute to ſupport one another. If, by accident, the ſhips of the Company fail of a cargo at one, they proceed to another, and are ſure to be laden home with goods, within the limited time for which they are chartered. By eſtabliſhing independent, and conſequently rival houſes, as is done in Europe, you loſe this great advantage.

tage. All the governments in Hindooſtan are entirely deſpotic. There are no written laws, to which the whole body of the ſubjects can indifferently appeal, and by the power of which, each individual, whether native or alien, is defended in perſon and property. The will of the preſent reigning deſpot is the law. And had the European national companies, no other mode of having their property ſecured, than the will of every capricious petty Prince, in whoſe territory they may, for the conveniency of commerce, chance to reſide, nothing could be ſo uncertain and inſecure. The trade from Europe to Aſia, differs in the modes of carrying it on, from that of all other traffic on the face of the earth. The merchant muſt have in him a power to protect his own property, from the rapacity of the Prince in whoſe territory he reſides. The Portugueze, the Dutch, the Engliſh, and the French, ever ſince their firſt reſort to India, by the Cape of Good Hope, have been obliged to carry on their national traffic with arms in their hands. So far arming is proper: but when this neceſſary principle of defence, comes to be changed for offence, the military ſpirit deſtroys the mercantile. To what a low and wretched ſtate are the Portugueze now fallen! How poor, trifling, and contemptible, is their trade to India in our days! It is little better with the French, ſince the Engliſh ſtripped them of their poſſeſſions in the laſt war. Even that little would ſoon be loſt to them, but

for

for that ſelfiſh narrow ſpirit, which yet remains amongſt the managers in Leadenhall-Street. The Dutch have firm footing in the Iſlands of Java, the Spice Iſlands, and on Ceylon. Whilſt they hold thoſe poſſeſſions, their trade to India will continue to be of great national importance; when they loſe thoſe Iſlands, their trade to Aſia will ſink to nothing. They know its conſequence, and will, as long as they can, ſupport it with the whole power of their ſtate. It ſhould ſeem that there is no room for any conſiderable trade to be kept up from Europe to Aſia, but by the maritime powers, as they are called. The Dutch enjoy almoſt the whole trade on the eaſtern ſide of the Straits of Sunda and Malacca, and the Engliſh that of all India Proper, to the weſt of thoſe Straits, except Ceylon. That the French will make ſome efforts, and that perhaps ſhortly, to recover a greater portion of the Aſiatic trade, I think likely enough. If they ſucceed, the Engliſh may thank themſelves. I dare believe, that that truly great miniſter, Mr. Pitt, (for I hate to remember his title,) hath many times repented the having altered his plan for attacking the Iſles of France. He had ordered the Britiſh ſquadron then in India, under the command of Admiral Corniſh, to cruiſe off the Iſlands of Mauritius and Bourbon, where he propoſed that it ſhould be joined by a conſiderable force from Europe. The Admiral obeyed his orders, and continued to cruiſe until he had loſt a thouſand ſeamen,

and

and quite ruined the ſquadron under his command. No advice was ſent, or, which was the ſame thing, none arrived to acquaint the Admiral, that *John Bull* had altered his reſolution, and was gone to beat his head againſt Belleiſle, on the coaſt of France, by which means the opportunity was loſt, of putting an end for ever to the French trade to Aſia. Such opportunities ſeldom offer in the courſe of human affairs. The great and penetrating ſoul of Pitt ſaw it, and prepared to ſnatch the lucky moment. What ſecret ſpring in the wheel of government it was, which turned him aſide from putting an end to the war by ſuch a noble ſtroke, that would have ſtabbed to death, the poor remains of the French power to the eaſtward of the Cape of Good Hope, hath never yet, and perhaps never will tranſpire.

The ſubjects of the European nations above mentioned, ever ſince they firſt traded to India, have been at war with the natives, or with one another, as auxiliaries to the natives. Lay open your trade, and you will have a houſe, eſtabliſhed by the merchants in Lombard-Street, at war with another ſet up by thoſe of the city of Briſtol, and both attacked by the honourable ſociety of merchants from Liverpool. Here are no great wholeſale merchants, from whom you can obtain a large quantity of ready wrought goods on demand; and for contractors, except you can protect and ſup-

port

port them, againſt the rapacity of the officers of their own government, and advance them the money for the goods you want, many months before hand, they never can ſupply you. Even the Eaſt India Company, with all their wealth and all their power, have every year, outſtanding balances, remaining due to them from money advanced for goods, which they never can recover, ſufficient to ruin private adventurers. Though I ſpeak now of Bengal, the ſame is true of every other part of India. The Dutch, with all the advantages of a regular eſtabliſhed company, interwoven with, and ſupported by their ſtate; though they gain conſiderably on the ſpices, tin, pepper, Batavia arrack, &c. which their ſhips import annually into Bengal, from Batavia; yet they find it extremely difficult to procure a lading for two, or at moſt three, ſhips from Bengal to Europe; and are beſides, ſo great loſers on the whole, by their factory at Chinſura, on the banks of the Ganges, that they moſt certainly would withdraw their ſervants, was it not that they would, in that caſe, be obliged to buy their muſlins, raw ſilk, and ſalt petre, at the port of London. This, and the advantages they draw from the opium which they carry from hence to Batavia, is the only motive to their continuing their Bengal trade.

To me, who am extremely dull of comprehenſion, it appears very extraordinary, that the Dutch have

have found means to draw a line round the Molucca Iflands, which, on pain of confifcation of our fhips, and death to the navigators, they forbid us to approach; who will not let us have a clove grain, bit of mace, or fingle nutmeg, but at their own price; yet are permitted by us, to carry out of this kingdom, as much opium and falt petre as they want. Serve them with the falt petre and opium, in the fame manner they do us with refpect to the fpice trade; put a ftop to their obtaining private bills at the amazing advantage of fifteen per cent. difcounted by the drawer, and Mynheer will wafh his hands of the Ganges, and fend to London for the articles of trade, imported into Europe from this country. If this is the fituation of the trade to Bengal, of a rich, opulent, and powerful company of merchants, trading to Afia for more than one hundred and fifty years, with every poffible advantage, and it really is their fituation at prefent, and has been for fome time, how are private Englifh adventurers to benefit themfelves, or their country, by the trade to Afia being laid open.

I KNOW fome fenfible men in Calcutta, who have expreffed concern, at the great refort of French private fhips this feafon to the river of Bengal, on a fuppofition, that it portended certain advantages to arife from that mode of conducting the French Afiatic trade, which would probably increafe fo,

as to become hurtful to the English East India Company. As the importation of fifteen ships from Europe, bearing French colours, in the course of one season, and some of them very capital ones, carried a very formidable mercantile appearance,* I was at some pains to investigate this matter to the bottom; and nothing can be more certain, than that if those private ships depended only on the gains to be made by their outward and homeward bound cargoes, every man concerned in them as owners, must inevitably be ruined. The amount of their invoices out, were in general very trifling; the articles, French cloth, copper, iron, marine stores, and French liquors of all sorts. Most of these articles would not produce the Europe price, and many of them were totally unsaleable. Such puny rivals will private adventurers ever prove to a well established mercantile company: For their homeward bound cargoes, besides the unfavourable proceeds of their outward bound, they brought those pernicious bills on private persons, amounting in the whole to about 150,000*l.* sterling. No provision having been made of goods with which to load them home, they are obliged to take all kinds of cloth, the refuse of the English and Dutch Companies, very ill wrought, and at much higher rates: And the whole amount of the returning cargoes of these fifteen private ships, will

*This Letter was written in 1776.

not equal the returns made to the English East India Company on four of theirs. Are ſuch traders to be envied? Can they continue long to be rivals to the English in this branch of trade? It is impoſſible. Yet to ſuch a ſituation (perhaps without knowing, and therefore not intending it) would the advocates for laying open the English trade to Aſia, reduce this branch of the national commerce.

I WOULD not trouble you, or myſelf, with ſaying more on the ſubject of theſe private traders with French colours, could I conſider them merely as ſuch; but I conceive the foundation of the voyages of theſe pretended merchant ſhips, to be deeper laid than is generally imagined. Thoſe who conceive that the French nation will ſubmit to be mere private traders to Aſia, longer than until they are ready, and ſee a favourable opportunity to have another ſtruggle with you for the ſuperiority, have a different opinion of French faith, and French policy, to what I have.

THE internal reſources of the French nation, ariſing from their form of government, and connected ſituation of the kingdom, enable them to ſhake off any difficulties under which they may labour, after a long and unſucceſsful war, much ſooner than any other ſtate in Europe. They have not been idle, or bad economiſts, for the laſt fourteen years. The peace of Paris was a bitter pill

for

for them to ſwallow, nor have they yet digeſted it. At the Iſles of France, Pondicherry, Chanderdernagore, and their other places of abode in Aſia, they do what they can to recover their mercantile influence. Theſe ſettlements are ſupported by the ſtate, and muſt continue ſo to be, until by ſome favourable ſtroke, they recover from the ſhocks received in the laſt war. Trading in private ſhips only, will never effect that. I am not of opinion that they will riſk a war with great Britain, merely on account of the Aſiatic trade; but that they are preparing in all quarters of the globe, to make another effort to recover their mercantile influence, I think is plain enough.

Every one of the private trading ſhips which come to India, touch at the French Iſlands. They bring out men, ſtores, and proviſions, to the Iſlands, and to Pondicherry, for which they receive a freight from the government. Thoſe of them which come to Bengal, carry back, on the King's account, ſalt petre, rice, wheat, peas, oil, ghee, and other proviſions, for which they are alſo paid a freight. Theſe freights out and home, though but ſmall, yet when added to the little they gain by their trade, will juſt ſerve to pay their expences, and keep alive a ſpirit of mercantile adventure in the nation, until better times. In the interim, the government are forming magazines, and training ſeamen. When they are ready to ſtrike, they will

 ſtrike.

ſtrike. But to conceive that the French, or the ſubjects of any other nation, can carry on a private trade to India, with the leaſt proſpect of advantage to themſelves, or their country, whilſt they are oppoſed by ſuch opulent and well eſtabliſhed Companies as the Engliſh and Dutch, ſhews great ignorance in the nature of the trade, by the Cape of Good Hope to the Eaſt Indies.

The Portugueze firſt diſcovered the abovementioned rout by ſea to Aſia. They begged ſome few ſpots of ground from the natives, on which to ſettle themſelves at firſt, bought others, and ſtole the remainder. The ſuperiority of their diſcipline, and the uſe of fire arms, gave them ſo great an advantage over the puſillanimous, inoffenſive natives of Aſia, that in a few years, they poſſeſſed moſt of the good trading ports on the ſea coaſt all over India. Had they left, at home, their prieſts and their ſuperſtition, and could have prevented the ſubjects of the other nations of Europe, from following them by the ſame rout, their empire in Aſia, might have become permanent and durable. But their great rivals the Dutch and Engliſh, who had laid aſide their ridiculous reverence for the ſee of Rome, came for cloth and ſpice, and not to make proſelytes, or depopulate whole regions, to ſtock Heaven with unwilling Chriſtians; and being ſubjects of ſtates better ſituated, better governed, and of a genius every way better calculated to en-

courage

courage and ſupport an extenſive commerce, they ſoon circumvented and diſlodged the men, who firſt ſhewed them the way by ſea, to theſe rich mercantile regions.

BIGOTRY and ſuperſtition, which at firſt infatuated and miſled the Portugueze, in their management of their new Aſiatic empire, is at length, by a ſtrange turn in human affairs, become of ſome uſe to them. In that wild, romantic, and barbarous attempt, of forcing the native Hindoos of all denominations, to become Chriſtians, they formed a numerous body of ſtrange animals, in the ſhape of human beings, called country born Portugueze Chriſtians. Theſe inhabit the ſea coaſt formerly held by their creators, whoſe every bad quality they have imbibed, together with their ſuperſtition, to which they have added quantum ſufficient of their own Pagan rights, which together, make up the moſt monſtrous repreſentation of original Chriſtian purity, that the higheſt enthuſiaſtic imagination can poſſibly conceive. Theſe veterans, to a man, adhere to the cauſe of the Portugueze, and by pedling, picking, and ſtealing, contribute all in their power, to ſupport thoſe ſhadows of the antient Portugueze grandeur in Aſia; the cities of Goa and Damaun, on the coaſt of Malabar; Moſambique, on the eaſtern ſide of Africa; and Macow, in China. But the ſurrounding independent inhabitants, the Mahrattas, Coffrees, and Chineſe,

deſpiſe,

despise, and treat them with the utmost degree of contempt. In this low, miserable, and helpless state of their Asiatic settlements, what advantage doth the Portugueze nation draw, from granting licenses to private ships to trade to India? None at all. And in case of a war with either of the maritime powers in Europe, they would be driven out from every one of them in the course of one year.

The Dutch have succeeded to most of the Portugueze original settlements in India. But their trade on the western side is greatly decayed; and but for some mistakes, and I think, unnecessary connivances in the English, would have long since sunk to nothing. I say unnecessary, because they are by no means, an open, generous, spirited rival in trade; heavy, selfish, jealous, and gormandizing. They have engrossed almost the whole trade of the eastern side of India. The English, and the English only, have one presidency, and a few out factories, on the west coast of Sumatra. On these the Dutch at Batavia, have ever looked with a jealous eye. At their desire, and with their connivance, the Count d'Estaing broke his parole, and sailed from the Mauritius, in the late war, with a small force, and destroyed them; and by the same means they will be destroyed, while the French possess the Islands, and the Dutch hold Java, when ever there is a war in Europe between Great Britain

and

and France. I ſhall ſay nothing of Balambangam: the plan itſelf was a fooliſh one, formed by an enthuſiaſt, and adopted by the Company, more with an intention to ſerve particular perſons, than with a view to public good. But Jones is dead, and Herbert ruined, and the Dutch, like the Devil, grown wiſer than of yore. They acted themſelves at Amboyna: Agents did the buſineſs full as well at Balambangam. If you ſay this laſt is conjecture, and may be falſe, I reply I have a right to riſk it. I well know the national character, and mercantile policy, of the people of whom I ſpeak. I ſaw, and felt, their attempt on Bengal, in the year 1759. The national intereſt, honour, and lives of all the King of England's ſubjects t[illegible] Bengal, depended on the activity, ſtea[illegible] undaunted courage, of one great [illegible] ſaved them from *Amboyna part th*[illegible] poor *Clive!* Accept here a tear [illegible] in honour of thy memory, by [illegible] land.

Nick Fr[illegible] co[illegible] ſeeing his old ri[illegible] headed, as to lay th[illegible] tenants; becauſe I [illegible] could not deviſe a ſchem[illegible] Dutch the aſcendency over th[illegible] to India. I could very well [illegible] Engliſh private ſhips would [illegible]

ports, to which they might reſort in queſt of cargoes, but it might be thought invidious; for the proverb ſays it is not proper that the truth ſhould be ſpoken at all times, and here, I hope, it would be needleſs: for ſurely that day will never come, when our rulers ſhall be ſo wanting to their duty, as to try ſuch an experiment, as that of laying open the trade to Aſia.

THE Danes poſſeſs a ſmall ſettlement or two, on the coaſt of Malabar; Tranquebar, on the coaſt of Coromandel; and Fort Frederick, in Bengal. Their trade has neither increaſed nor diminiſhed
[illegible]ch for a long courſe of years. They act pru-
[illegible] and fairly with the natives, have force
[illegible] ſecure the property of the merchant liv-
[illegible] protection, and their trade being
[illegible] or four ſhips in a ſeaſon, not very
[illegible] manage ſo as to carry it on very
[illegible] heir own bounds. They pay
[illegible] and receive many favours
[illegible] ſo inclined, annihilate
[illegible] nd [illegible] are ani-
[illegible] ſitions, and con-
[illegible] milar ſituations. I
[illegible] Danes, yet I could wiſh
[illegible] ring ſilver to Bengal, to
[illegible] heretofore, inſtead of bills,
[illegible] and not with them. Simple
[illegible] onducting their trade, weak

as in reality their forts and factories are, deprive them of them, and at once their trade is no more. They could not give the merchant, manufacturer, and weaver, the necessary protection, and without it, in vain would they attempt to carry it on by single private ships, or houses of commerce, which cannot exist in Asia, but by force, or at least the appearance of it, and by a body of native merchants and traders, collected together by degrees, lodged and protected within your own distri[illegible] and habituated to your customs and manner[illegible] long course of years. Such in general i[illegible]
tion of the trade, carried on by the [illegible]
Europe, round the Cape of Go[illegible]
The Swedes, indeed, have som[illegible]
way, but it is mostly to C[illegible]
have hitherto kept posse[illegible]
bour of Manilla, w[illegible]
the coast of [illegible]
made up of [illegible]
mercantile advantages[illegible]
serves only to convey [illegible]
Asia, [illegible]
There is [illegible]
ing nations [illegible]
to those islands by[illegible]
of nature points out [illegible]
Cape of Good Hope, [illegible]
Sunda, or Batty. Since [illegible]
the English in the late wa[illegible]

paid more attention to it. The country round is fruitful and populous. There are vast numbers of that motley race of mortals, whose religion is made up of Christianity and Paganism; but these being a compound of Spaniard and Malay, they are a stouter, and more robust race of people, than those which spring from the Portugueze ingrafted on the Hindoo. The Spaniards will not pay you the ransom money for the town, but would have no objection to return your visit to some of your settle- [illegible] on the coast of Coromandel. Since the late [illegible] have prohibited the English from ap- [illegible] ose islands under any pretence whatso- [illegible] art, I do not know a place in the [illegible] re body of forces may be disci- [illegible] o act, with greater secrecy, [illegible] person the least conver- [illegible] nd monsoon winds, [illegible] ill discover at [illegible] could be [illegible] at the French Islands, [illegible] a, in order to attack [illegible] uron, [illegible] a good [illegible] declaredly [illegible] Cape of Good [illegible] aits of Sunda to the [illegible] want of stout resolute [illegible] d to the service. Disci- [illegible] here is no want of men,

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The neighbourhood of that rich, plentiful, and populous town of Batavia, will be no hindrance to ſuch an attempt. As I know the conduct the Dutch held at the Iſland of Carrack, in the Gulf of Perſia, when the Engliſh loſt their ſettlement at Bundarick; their behaviour at Batavia, when the French took Bencoolen; and ſaw the whole of their attempt on Bengal, under Colonel Ruſſell, in 1759; I own I am fully perſuaded, that they will never omit an opportunity of ſhaking our power in India, even though in the attempt, they riſked a part of their own. With ſuch numerous, powerful, and irreconcileable mercantile rivals on all ſides of you, is this the time proper for trying experiments? Surely no man will anſwer in the affirmative.

The ample and permanent territorial poſſeſſions now held by the Eaſt India Company, give to the Engliſh nation, that excluſive right to the trade to Aſia, with reſpect to the other nations in Europe, (the Dutch excepted,) which charters granted formerly to particular ſocieties in each ſtate, were ſuppoſed to have conveyed to individuals. What then would be the conſequence of laying open the trade to Aſia, but the giving back to our rivals, the advantages which, at an immenſe expence of blood and treaſure, we have acquired over them?

The duties, and other imposts, on the Asiatic goods, imported by the Company, bring a neat *million sterling* into the national coffers. It increases annually, and will continue to increase, while proper attention is paid to this beneficial branch of national commerce. Numbers of individuals grow rich by the same means which are used to fill the national spunge: And Montesquieu will tell you, that immense fortunes acquired by merchants in the way of trade, though it increases luxury, is by no means prejudicial in a monarchial state.

The regular forces kept on foot at the Company's different provinces in Asia, amount to sixty thousand effective men; these give the necessary protection to the trade we carry on, and are paid out of the surplus proceeds of the territorial revenue. They are cloathed in British cloth, and are at all times ready to oppose to our European invaders, or Asiatic enemies. A good ministry will watch over the managers of this rich mercantile mine, but be very cautious how they wantonly change the established mode of management.

I really dont know how your systematical writers contrive to keep so cooly close to the matter in hand; here am I now quite at a loss, whether I should return back to my plans for connecting and extending the Company's Asiatic commerce, or now, that I have got hold on the military establish-

ment, whether I had not better proceed at once to carry on the lines of communication, between the Company's troops ſtationed at Bengal and Bombay, by extending the chain of poſts from Calcutta, by Allahabad, to Agra, to Delhi, to Poonah, and ſo round by Surat to Bombay; then fly down the coaſt of Malabar to Anjango; there croſs over the peninſula through the kingdom of Travancore, Myſore, all through the Carnatic, to Madraſs, and on again to Maſulipatan, Ganjam, Cattack, Midnapore, and ſo home to Calcutta. Here is a pretty little circle for you: Pray, Sir, take the map, and obſerve how eaſily all this is to be effected, and how finely it ſurrounds and ſecures to you, the whole, or greateſt part of the trading inhabitants of India Proper. But I am deterred from mounting a poney to whoſe paces I have not been accuſtomed, by obſerving the ridiculous and contemptible figure a man exhibits, who will be meddling out of his own profeſſion. General John Clavering knows juſt as much of forming plans for collecting the revenue, providing an inveſtment, dreſſing opium, or making ſalt, as I do of marches and counter marches. Prithee, *old veteran*, diſmount from that unſeemly hobby-horſe, which providence hath not given you the talents to manage, and no longer riſk the national intereſt, and your own neck, by obſtinately attempting to govern an animal, that ſtoops to nothing but gentle uſage, common honeſty, and common ſenſe.

THIS

This last digression, which hath stolen on me I know not how, has sunk my spirits into a kind of state of despondency. I fancy that I see the glorious mercantile edifice, which, for a long course of years, I have been wishing to see perfected, sinking down to ruin, and crumbling into dust.

The perfidious, enthusiastic, and superstitious conduct of the Portugueze, on their first settling in Asia, gave the Princes of the country a very indifferent opinion of the sense and morals of the Europeans, who had found a way by sea to their dominions. The bloody quarrels which soon after ensued, between the first comers and their immediate followers, did not remove their prejudices. They soon discovered, that to gain a point in trade over their rivals, these bold and daring visitors would sacrifice every idea of honour and good faith. The first inducement for bringing about a commercial intercourse between the inhabitants of the east and western section of the globe, viz. a friendly and equitable exchange of the European articles of trade for those of Asia, was forgotten or laid aside. Treaties offensive and defensive, were entered into; and the indolent, pusillanimous Asiatic despot, surrendered the valuable mercantile commodities of his country, to those among the new comers, who could best defend him from, or revenge him of his enemies.

This joining a ſpirit for conqueſt, to the eager mercantile avidity which firſt gave motion to the adventurers, introduced a new principle of conduct, greatly injurious, if not abſolutely deſtructive, of their true intereſt. It would lead me too far from the ſubject which firſt prompted me to the writing of theſe Letters, or I could prove by a great number of inconteſtible facts, that the firſt cauſe of the decline of the power of the Portugueze, the French, and of the preſent debilitated, feeble, declining ſtate of the Dutch commerce in India, was entirely owing to their injudiciouſly mingling too great a portion of the military leaven in their mercantile polity, and an unnatural ingraftment of military heads on mercantile bodies. I could wiſh our rulers would ſeriouſly conſider this matter, and take warning from the fate of their neighbours.

Before the war which terminated at Aix-la-Chapelle in 1748, the Engliſh had kept pretty cloſe to their firſt mercantile principle. So far were they from thinking of making conqueſts, that they ſuffered on the coaſt of Malabar, at Bengal, and in many other parts of India, many injuries and inſults, from the native Princes and their officers. The few troops they had, were rather for ſhow than uſe; and thoſe were ſtationed within their factories, to cover them from the ravages of freebooters, and not to annoy the ſurrounding country powers. In this ſtate they carried on an extenſive and

and beneficial branch of trade; protected by the warlike character, and great maritime power, of the ſtate to which they were ſubjects, until the reſtleſs ambition of the French on the coaſt of Coromandel, called them forth to action. On this ſtage the great Clive firſt made his appearance in a military character, and by his example, rouſed the martial genius of his countrymen, and dragged the cautious, prudent meaſurer of cloth, from behind the counter to the camp. Their appearance there was become neceſſary and juſtifiable; for it was in defence of the priviledges and immunities, which had been granted to them by the Mogul Princes, as a body of Engliſh merchants, trading under the ſanction of a royal phirmaun to their dominions. The conſequences of that war, and the ſucceeding one with the country powers, are well known; but they have led the Engliſh Eaſt India Company very far from the original intention, and nature of their conſtitution, and have opened a wide door for innovation. There is yet time and opportunity, for them to revert back to firſt principles. Armed thy are, and armed they muſt remain, in order to keep up the influence they have (I may ſay) accidently acquired; but there is no neceſſity for their running the riſk of meeting the fate of their predeceſſors, contemporaries, and rivals in India, by changing their government from a civil mercantile body, into a military deſpotiſm. How near they have lately approached to this fatal change, the conduct

conduct of General Clavering and Colonel Monſon at Bengal, and of General Sir Robert Fletcher and Colonel Stewart at Madraſs, are evidence ſufficient.

If the placing General Clavering at Bengal, General Carnac at Bombay, and General Fletcher or Colonel Stewart at Madraſs, is to prepare the way for changing thoſe mercantile preſidencies into military governments, like Gibraltar or Mahon, or as a preparative for taking the garriſons into the hands of government, and laying open the trade to Aſia, I ſhall be ſorry for it; and feel again that diſagreeable ſenſation, which weighed down my heart, on the firſt intelligence we received here, that a civil war had broke out in America. The ſons of Britain united, may brave the world to arms. Divided, what will they prove, but the poor ſhadows of a declining ſtate, whoſe name and great actions may, like that of the ancient Romans, be handed down to poſterity, but the government, or the people themſelves, be no more to be found? Or if continuing to exiſt, will be repreſented as modern Rome, and the miſerable Italians, do the old miſtreſs of the world, and her hardy veterans. If the Engliſh trade to Aſia is to be laid open, the Crown muſt take poſſeſſion of the Company's lands, forts, and garriſons. The intereſt of the ſtate and of individuals, will be different; and though enough may be dragooned out of the natives, to pay the wages of their maſters in ſcarlet robes,

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how is the ſurplus, ſhould any remain, to be remitted to the Engliſh treaſury? Not in ſpecie, for we ſhall have none left: not by private traders, for they will be rivals to one another, and ſmugglers in the ſtate. Thoſe of them will be the moſt favoured, who ſhall find the means to ſtand higheſt in the opinion of the military deſpot, preſiding at each of the preſidencies. Hath it ever yet in the courſe of human affairs been known, that military governors, ſet over the diſtant provinces of a ſtate, have proved themſelves friends to liberty, or promoters of trade? Thoſe who expect it of them, have attended very little to the influence a prejudice contracted by education, hath over the human mind.

THE man who wiſhes, or hopes, to make the natives of Bengal uſeful to Great Britain, muſt ſtrictly follow your plan of increaſing the conſumption, and exportation of the ſurplus grain, and manufactures of this kingdom. The cultivator of the ſoil, and manufacturer of the cloth, and other articles of the export trade, are ſo blended and connected together, that the oppreſſion or injury offered to one, is immediately felt by the other. On the principles on which the Eaſt India Company are founded, and the eſtabliſhed mode by which their affairs are now under your management conducted, every good national purpoſe for holding theſe provinces, is anſwered. The moment you change the form of government,

and

and lay the trade open, every good now accruing to the English nation, will be loſt.

I KNOW that there are many well meaning men, who think that the Britiſh empire is become too extenſive and unweildy, to be longer properly governed on the principle of a ſimple or limited monarchy, and that the introduction of military governors into its diſtant provinces, is but a natural ſymptom of its near approach to deſpotiſm. Tho' I muſt own that there are many ſtrong arguments in favour of that opinion, yet I hope that there is ſpirit and ſtrength enough left in the conſtitution, to enable it to revert back in time to its firſt principles. There is not a doubt, but that too great a portion of the military ſpirit, hath been introduced into the management of the affairs of the Eaſt India Company abroad. The influence acquired by the miniſtry in Leadenhall-Street, will not leſſen that ſpirit. An opportunity will ſoon offer, from the expiration of the Company's charter, to new model the form of government in theſe diſtant provinces. There are two things which muſt be avoided at that critical period, both of which, I much fear, the miniſtry will labour to effect, becauſe they will prepare the way for the introduction of deſpotiſm, to which the princes and miniſters, in all the monarchies that have ever yet appeared on the face of the earth, have had a ſtrong propenſity. I mean by taking the Company's landed poſ-

ſeſſions into the hands of government, and incorporating the India ſtock with the national debt, for which they will grant government ſecurity, and lay open the trade to Aſia. Let any man who thinks theſe fears chimerical, advert to what large ſtrides have been made by a venal Houſe of Commons, within theſe laſt twelve years, towards furniſhing the Prince with the powers of an abſolute government.

Every one of the nations who have traded to Aſia by the Cape of Good Hope, commenced with the true ſpirit of merchants, juſtice, equity, punctuality, and moderation. Whilſt they adhered to thoſe principles, their trade flouriſhed, and extended over all Aſia; but when, intoxicated by ſucceſs, and allured by ambition, they neglected thoſe prudent maxims, or changed them, by admitting by degrees, too great a portion of the military ſpirit, from that period their influence as merchants declined. The chicanery of politics, the blaze of war, and claſh of arms, kept up the ball for a time, but theſe produced their uſual fruit—oppreſſion, poverty, ſlavery, and rags. Where is now the grandeur and pride of Ormus, and of Goa? Sunk even lower than that of Pondicherry and Chandernagore; and the condition of theſe are, God knows, miſerable enough.

It muſt be admitted, that the nature of the Britiſh government, the ſpirit and genius of her peo-

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ple, her naval power, and peculiarly happy ſituation, promiſes a longer duration to her empire, than has hitherto happened to any preceding one which has hitherto appeared on the face of the earth. But all this will not prevent her decline, if the principles on which ſhe was governed, in raiſing to ſuch imperial greatneſs as ſhe now enjoys, be neglected and forgotten. If the military ſpirit ſupplants the mercantile, in any part of her wide extending dominions, that part will firſt be ſenſible of the change: nor would any part of her vaſt empire decline ſo ſoon, in conſequence of ſuch a change, as her Aſiatic provinces. They pay their tribute in rich merchandize. The collectors of this tribute muſt be trained up merchants, who muſt alſo poſſeſs the civil power, and hold the purſe ſtrings. To this power the military muſt be ſubordinate, or the whole will degenerate into tyranny, under whoſe baleful influence, no mercantile plant can ever flouriſh.

Whoever ſhall be miniſter at the termination of the old charter, if he wiſhes to increaſe the power of the crown by any poſſible means, without regard to the true intereſt of the nation, the cant will be renewed, of the impropriety there is in a company of merchants holding kingdoms in ſubjection, and poſſeſſing, in bar to all other of his Majeſty's ſubjects, an excluſive right to ſo extenſive and beneficial a branch of trade as that to Aſia.

Myriads

Myriads of pamphleteers will be employed, set speeches will be made, and the great leviathan will be amused with a barrel, whilst the state projectors run away with the ship. That is, the Company's original stock, with what the minister shall please to allow them for their forts, garrisons, lands, and tenements, will be, in the language of 'Change-Alley, *consolidated*. King's officers will be sent to govern these mercantile provinces, the East India Company annihilated, and the trade laid entirely open to all his Majesty's subjects; and the solid, and almost exclusive benefits, now enjoyed by the English nation, divided amongst all the nations of the world; and all this brought about to secure the Ministry thirty additional votes in the House of Commons. This is one side of the picture; but thank God, there is yet another not so glaring perhaps, but infinitely more solid; for it hath truth, experience, and national prosperity, for its object.

There is not a man, the least conversant in the nature of commerce, but will admit, that it would be more for the interest of a kingdom, constituted, governed, and situated, like Great Britain, to send to Asia, a million sterling annually in bullion, and have the returns in the articles of merchandize, than to receive double the sum from these provinces in specie, by way of tribute, without any trade at all. How infinitely more advantageous will her intercourse with these provinces be, when it shall

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be made to appear, that the managers of this great and important branch of national commerce, have it in their power, without fraud, rapine, or any other illegal means, to export annually to a certain ſale in India, a million and a half worth of the wrought manufactures of the nation; and to make returns from Aſia to the port of London, in rich articles of Aſiatic merchandize, which would find ready ſale in Europe, to the full and neat amount of 4,500,000*l.* ſterling annually. I have as clear an idea of the manner how the above exports and imports may, with ſafety, eaſe, and honour to Great Britain, be effected, as I have of any of the moſt ſimple propoſition in arithmetic; and when I ſat down to write theſe Letters, I conceived that it was very eaſy to communicate the idea to you, Sir, and others, whoſe intereſt, as well as duty, it is, to know it as well as I do; but in attempting the elucidation, I have found difficulties, of which, at firſt, I had not the leaſt conception. We have, in the long ſtruggle for power, which has been kept up with various ſucceſs, and with various ſorts of enemies, for more than twenty years, deviated widely from our firſt principles. Corruptions, miſmanagements, deviations, and innovations, have vitiated the original conſtitution of the Company. A military ſpirit hath grown up, and almoſt ſuppreſſed the mercantile ſpirit; and this hath cauſed ſo great a change in the order of things, that I have frequently found, that though my poſtula-

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tums and reaſoning thereon, were true, and applicable to the conſtitution of the Company, as a mercantile body, yet appeared chimerical, and almoſt ridiculous, when applied to them in their preſent unſettled ſtate. They are become something more than merchants, and leſs than ſovereign Princes. Whilſt the managers at home, ſay that trade is their only object, their military ſervants abroad pant after conqueſts. They are preciſely in that dangerous ſituation, where the Portugueze, the Dutch, and the French, have been before them. Security, proſperity, and duration, points back to their firſt principles. Ambition, avarice, and falſe pride, looks forward to conqueſt and dominion; and that will breed the worm which deſtroyed the grandeur and mercantile influence, of their predeceſſors in Aſia; and if purſued, will ultimately deſtroy them. If, at the approaching favourable criſis, of the termination of the Company's charter, it ſhall pleaſe God to direct the hearts of our rulers, to grant another charter, formed and digeſted on the true national mercantile principles, where the military ſhall be totally ſubſervient to the civil power, the commanding officer having a ſeat in council in military affairs only, and where the ſtate ſhall reſerve to themſelves, a ſufficient controlling power over the Company, to prevent ſo neceſſary and uſeful a body of men, from forming ærial ſchemes, of raiſing the dividends on the ſtock into a bubble, to the diſcredit of the nation, and prejudice

prejudice of individuals, on the one hand; and on the other, from finking into low, dark, defigning, felfifh, ftock-jobbing pedlars, whofe fpirit and principles is as foreign from that of a candid, ingenious body of Englifh merchants, as that of a band of banditti, is from that of a corps of brave officers. I will here rifk one thought, which may probably, if made a claufe of fome future act of Parliament, or charter, be a check on the forementioned evils; viz. that the new Company fhall divide the firft year, no more than *fix per cent.* the fecond *feven*, and the third *eight*, at which it fhall continue to be fixed, and never rife higher. That all the furplus fhall be formed into a ftock, fimilar to the national finking fund, and fet apart to fupply extraordinary contingencies, or be applied to make up the dividend *eight per cent.* if by loffes at fea, or other unforefeen accidents, the next annual proceeds fhould fall fhort, and be infufficient for that purpofe. And this furplus fund to be under the controul of Parliament.

I HAVE already faid, that I ufed your name without your knowledge. Indeed thefe Letters are of fuch a nature, that they cannot be fhewn to any one for advice. One would object to their being too bold; another, that the reafoning is too general; and a third, that it is too particular. The Directors will be angry, and perhaps order the Author home; the military will be for having

him tied up to the halbert; the miniſtry will laugh at him; and the critics mince his lucubrations all to all ſcraps. But you, Sir, who know him very well, and who, as I ſaid ſomewhere before, will be called upon by your Prince and country, to give your aſſiſtance in forming and digeſting a code of laws, to be inſerted in the new charter, (if one is to be granted, which, for the honour and happineſs of my native country, I hope will be the caſe,) will bear with the blunders, incorrections, and other faults, in the hope of finding ſome few mercantile ideas, which may be of uſe to you in the great national undertaking abovementioned.

This Letter is, by unforeſeen digreſſion, become already ſo very long, that was I now to enter into a diſcuſſion of the matters propoſed in the firſt part, it would ſwell into a book. I ſhall, therefore, cloſe it here, and endeavour, in a third, which I will take the liberty to addreſs to you, whether you continue in the government or not, to lay down a plan, for combining and fixing the national trade to Aſia in ſuch a manner, as will make it permanent, and for ever uſeful to the Engliſh nation.

LETTER III.

FROM A

FREE MERCHANT in BENGAL,

TO

WARREN HASTINGS, *Esq.*

HONOURABLE SIR;

I HAVE already addreſſed to you two Letters on the ſubject of Aſiatic commerce; this is a third; and ſo intereſting and unbounded is the ſubject, I cannot promiſe that all I have to ſay, will be included in this.

FROM the moſt early period of time, Europe has ſupplied Aſia with ſilver and gold, and received in return, ſpices, odoriferous gums, rich ſilks, muſlins, and coarſe callicoes. The mines in Europe were wrought to ſupply this great drain, until the more rich ones in the New World were diſcovered. From that

that period, Spain imported from her American dominions, as much as was wanted for the uſe both of Europe and Aſia. To find out the tracks the precious metals found, by which to penetrate into the interior parts of Hindooſtan, would require a more minute diſcuſſion, than is neceſſary for my preſent purpoſe. Suffice it to ſay, that from the River Indus, along the coaſts of Guzurat, Cambaya, and Malabar, ſouth, to Cape Comorin, and from thence northward, along the coaſt of Coromandel and Oriſſa, to the Ganges, there are diſperſed great numbers of rich trading cities, to which, both before, and ſince the diſcovery of the paſſage round the Cape of Good Hope, moſt of the trading nations of the earth, have found means to convey ſilver and gold, which they gave in exchange for the rich articles of merchandize, both wrought and unwrought, the produce of the great Aſiatic peninſula, known by the name of India Proper.

The influence the Engliſh Eaſt India Company have acquired in this rich and extenſive country, in particular on the ſea coaſt, deſcribed in the above paragraph, is well known to every body. The Portugueze, the Dutch, and the French, have, in their turns, enjoyed great influence, and great power; but by changing their conduct, and from peaceable merchants becoming military tyrants, their influence and power have ſunk to nothing, and their names have become names of reproach

over

over all Aſia. On their firſt trading to India, the line was very judicious, and carefully drawn between the civil and military power. The laſt, whilſt trade was the ſole object of their employers, were prudently held in a ſtate of entire dependence on the firſt. They traded with arms in their hands, it is true; but it was more with a view to the ſecurity of their own property, than with intention to plunder that of others. When they had, by ſervile adulation, and by preſents to the Princes of the country, obtained a grant of a ſmall diſtrict or territory, whereon to erect factories, they walled them round, and the troops employed to guard them, were permitted by the neighbouring Princes, or ſtates, as things neceſſary to the credit of an opulent body of merchants, whom they permitted as ſuch to reſide among them. Whilſt this firſt principle of mercantile polity was ſtrictly adhered to, and their troops were conſidered as guards, or watchmen ſet over their merchandize, and only increaſed, as the factories multiplied or extended, the nation from whence they came, drew real befit from their Aſiatic commerce; but no ſooner was this moderate mercantile ſpirit vitiated by, or changed for, that of the military, from that moment did the real intereſt of their native country decline in India. When leaving the profeſſion of merchants, they affected to be conquerors, and from private citizens, became ſovereign Princes, blinded and led on by their paſſions, they left behind

hind their firſt principles, and the cataſtrophe was for ever, and at all times, inevitably the ſame.

A Prince of the Blood of the Houſe of Braganza, aſked an old Portugueze Admiral, what would be the beſt means to recover the national trade to India. "Recall four fifths of your troops, hang up "nine tenths of the prieſts, apply the money which "is ſpent in maintaining of them, to augment your "naval power," *ſaid the old veteran*, "and the "trade will recover of itſelf." "I was ſent," ſaid General Lally, "to India to ruin one Company, "and have ruined two." He did not advert ſufficiently to one circumſtance, which was, that the Engliſh Company had not, at that time, deviated ſo much from mercantile principles as the French had done, or his obſervation would have been as applicable to the condition of the former, as it was to that of the latter. Lally's impatient military ſpirit, finiſhed the work Du Pleſſis' ambition had begun, and totally ruined the trade of France to Aſia.

THE Engliſh Eaſt India Company have ſo far deviated from their firſt principles, on the coaſt of Coromandel, as to become military auxiliaries to a rapacious deſpot, inſtead of a reſpectable body of merchants, in alliance with a powerful Prince, whoſe country they were meant to benefit, as well as their own, by a due regulation of the tariff. The

troops

troops of the Nabob are now in arrears of pay; for as that Prince extends his dominions, his subjects are but the more oppreſſed; and as the military ſpirit increaſes, the mercantile ſpirit declines. Another war in the Carnatic, will moſt likely ruin both, by transferring the power to other hands. Lord Pigot ſaw this, and wiſhed to prevent it, by reſtoring the Tanjour country to its proper Prince; but the military ſpirit had acquired too great an aſcendency in the Council at Madraſs. Thoſe mercantile managers for the Company, had loſt ſight of their firſt profeſſion. Inſtead of attending to the commercial concerns of their employers, or of their own, they had lent their money, at high intereſt, to the Nabob, who could not pay them, but by grievouſly oppreſſing both his old and new ſubjects. To enable him to do this, that they might draw from him the advantages propoſed, they violently diveſted his Lordſhip of the government. If this manœuvre doth not bring after it the ruin of the Carnatic, before the Company can interpoſe, it will be becauſe the French are not yet quite ready, or that Hyder Ally is accidentally, and fortunately for us, employed in ſubduing the Dutch ſettlements on the Malabar coaſt.

It may not be amiſs to enquire here, how it has happened that the Dutch, who contributed much to drive the Portugueze out of India, have not themſelves ſuffered the ſame fate from the French or

or the Engliſh. As to the French, they, from the nature of their government, ſet out with too great a portion of the military ſpirit, and that ſpirit will for ever prevent them from having any very permanent commercial eſtabliſhments in any part of the world, far diſtant from the parent ſtate; as ſuch eſtabliſhments can only be protected by a great naval power; and a great naval power is impracticable for a monarchial ſtate to form, and maintain for any long time, whoſe principle of government borders ſo nearly on deſpotiſm, as doth that of France. A very ſmall portion of the mercantile ſpirit, was mixed up in the government of the ſettlements they formed in Aſia. The military ſpirit preponderated too much, and this added to the lively capricious diſpoſition of the nation, hurried them on to conqueſt and dominion, by which they were themſelves ruined, before they had time to fix themſelves ſecurely, and attempt the ruin of their rivals. Beſides, a Frenchman will not deign to quarrel with a Dutchman, whilſt an Engliſhman is to be found. Had they ſucceeded in their attack on Madraſs in the late war, the Engliſh power in India, would in conſequence, have been extremely reduced, and then the Dutch would not have eſcaped them long. The ſettlements of that Republic in Aſia, are preciſely in the ſame ſituation as the Republic itſelf is in Europe; they hang ſuſpended by a ſingle hair. It is neceſſary to the balance of power, accidentally eſtabliſhed between the leading

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ſtates in Europe, that the Republic ſhould exiſt; and on that precarious tenor ſhe will exiſt, until ſome two or three of the leading ſtates on the continent, ſhall have ſettled among themſelves, in what manner to ſhare her ſpoils. The Engliſh, her natural friends, will interpoſe, and may, for a time, protract her fall: but fall ſhe muſt, and that, perhaps, ſooner than is generally imagined. When the Dutch covertly aſſiſt the French, to reduce the power of the Engliſh in Aſia, they may be ſaid to be infatuated, and totally blind to their real intereſts; for their very being as a trading ſtate in Aſia, depends on the power of the Engliſh, more than on their own. Here they are quite ripe for deſtruction; and but for the fortunately accidental interpoſition of the Engliſh power, which the commercial jealouſy of the Dutch will not permit them to ſee, they would have been ruined long ago. Rigid virtue, ſevere economy, and unſullied mercantile probity, are the principles on which their ſtate was eſtabliſhed. How far they have adhered to their firſt principles, as it relates to their character as a nation, or their ſituation in Europe, I am not here to examine; but that they have forgot them all in Aſia, I ſhall preſently make appear. It is ſomewhat ſtrange, that the people of the colonies, ſent out, or planted, by a mercantile republic, as well as the ſubjects which they acquire by foreign conqueſts, have been governed on principles very different from the ſpirit which animated the parent

ſtate, in all ages of the world; but ſo it is, and ever has been; and this may be proved by references to the hiſtory of the Tyrians, the Athenians, the Carthaginians, Venetians, Genoeſe, and Hollanders. How it comes to paſs that a people, whoſe ſpirit of government is eſtabliſhed on virtue and economy, ſhould, on the inſtant they acquire foreign dominions, call in a new principle by which to manage them, and that the moſt daſtardly to which the human mind is ſubject, (*fear*,) and thereby ſow the ſeeds of their own deſtruction, is to me inconceiveable.* The Iſland of Ceylon is rich in various articles of merchandize, very extenſive, and prodigious fertile; was formerly well peopled, and well cultivated; but ſince the total conqueſt of it by the Dutch in the war of 1762, when they ſubdued the kingdom of Candy, it

* The writer, when theſe Letters were compoſed in 1776, had in his mind our injudicious attempt to tax the Americans, by laws to which they had not given their aſſent. The conſequences are too well known, and includes another inſtance of the folly of parent ſtates, firſt permitting colonies to become numerous, and imbibe the ſpirit of liberty and independence, and then make attempts to enſlave them. The Dutch ſettlers at the Cape of Good Hope, were on the point of trying their ſtrength with their parent ſtate, when the late war interpoſed, and rouſed the Dutch from their ſlumber at home; and though they may find it difficult to cauſe the French to withdraw their troops entirely from the Cape of Good Hope, when ever that event ſhall take place, they will ſend a ſufficient number of their own, to overawe the coloniſts; if not, the latter will ſoon follow the example of America, and declare themſelves independent.

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wears a different face. The inhabitants are reduced to nearly one half. The survivors are perfect slaves, and permitted to cultivate nothing but the cinnamon tree and pepper shrub; for the produce of which, their taskmasters allow them a most miserable pittance. Was a foreign power to land on the Island, the natives would revolt to a man. How long they would have been free from such a visit, and what would have been the consequences of it, had the French succeeded on the Coromandel coast, in the late war, I will leave them to determine. They have subdued and surrounded the Island of Java in the same manner. Here they draw their principal advantage from the industry of the Chinese. But so rigidly severe is their government, both of the native Javans and of the Chinese, and so ill affected are both those casts of people to their despotism, that was a strong squadron of ships to appear on their coast, with a force equal to that sent by the English in the late war, from Madrass to the Manillas, the Dutch would be driven from the Island in a month. The Spice Islands are held by the same tenure, and indeed, so are all their possessions to the eastward; and nothing could prevent their sinking into the same miserable insignificance with their predecessors the Portugueze, but that the English, who, though their rivals as merchants, yet that rivalry is so tempered by their friendship to them, as subjects of an European state, in friendly and strict alliance with Great Bri-

tain, that it secures to them their present possessions, in a manner more permanent, than any remaining power or influence of their own could possibly do.

England is now,* with respect to the United Provinces, as the elder sister of the same house, in possession of the sovereignty, to a younger sister by the same parents. Their political interests are the same; they must flourish or decline together. As no little squabbles about caps, ribbons, or pins, should induce a personal dislike to one another in the two natural sisters, neither should a few trifling mercantile differences in interest and opinion, induce a want of friendship in the political sisters. If they must squabble about spice and salt petre, when considered as commercial rivals, let those accidental differences in mercantile polity, be debated and adjusted on their own principles. As neighbouring states, it is their mutual interest for ever to agree, and support one another. United as maritime powers, who is it that dare attempt to give them laws with impunity? Divided, they weaken each other, to the benefit of their common enemy. The fall of the Republic will draw after it the fate of Monarchy. The fall of the Monarchy would bury the Republic with its ruins. As states they are natural friends; as merchants, I believe, from the

* This Letter was written in 1776.

nature of things, they muſt be enemies: I wiſh a diviſion of the advantages of the latter, could be ſo equitably made between them, as to give content to both: But this may be attempting to waſh the Blackamoor white. A further acquiſition of dominion in India, would involve the Engliſh in perpetual wars, and the moſt trifling miſcarriage, enentangle them in ſuch difficulties, as to render impoſſible the neceſſary attention to the mercantile intereſt, from which alone, the nation can draw any real and permanent advantages.

The acquiſition of the Iſland of Salſet, which in a manner ſurrounds the Iſland of Bombay, is ſufficient to ſecure the latter from the danger of a famine. A further extent of dominion on that ſide the Indian peninſula, would be injurious to us as a mercantile people. Any arguments which may be urged, to prove the neceſſity of taking in the country between Bombay and Surat, may with equal juſtice be enforced, for proceeding on to Cambaya, to Guzurat, to Poonah, and to Delhi. When merchants become too ſtrongly infected with the military ſpirit, no line can be drawn to ſatisfy them. The peaceable poſſeſſion of Bombay is neceſſary to the Company, and to the ſtate: it is ſecured to them by the late ceſſion of Salſet. The influence their ſituation there gives them, is ſufficient for every good mercantile purpoſe. We may, if we pleaſe, go on to loſe Great Britain in Aſia;

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as Mr. Pitt ſaid you won America in Germany. Swell, reptile, until you are obliged to remember the frog in the fable.

Leave the Mahrattas to ſettle the ſucceſſion in their own government. Let which party ſoever prevail, they will readily grant you all you want, a fair and equitable adjuſtment of the tariff. You command the ſea coaſt of Malabar with your natural arms, a marine force. Bombay is a noble magazine and arſenal; a place of retreat, refreſhment, and for the repairs of your ſhips. The Mahratta government favours all kinds of merchants; we as ſuch, are neceſſary to them: They never will know us in any other character. Send them a bale of Britiſh broad cloth as an ambaſſador, and they will do juſtice to, and reſpect the owners. From this fairly acquired and well choſen center, our influence extends in a glorious circle, as far as, in prudence and moderation, we can wiſh it. Leave conqueſt, and the trade of making ſlaves, to deſpots, and the ſlaves of deſpots. Firmly rooted at Bombay, and ſupported by the true mercantile principles, juſtice, equity, punctuality, and moderation. What more would we have? Even now our influence extends northward to Surat, to Cambaya, and to the River Indus, with a permanency very different from that acquired by the Macedonian freebooter, Alexander. At theſe places we obtain, on juſt and reaſonable

terms, innumerable ſorts of ſtained and unſtained calicoes, with which we ſupply Europe, Africa, and America: from Hudſon's Bay to the Equator, on both ſides the great Atlantic Ocean; cotton for our trade to China and Bengal; and piece goods of a thouſand ſorts and dyes, with which we ſupply the marts in the Gulf of Perſia and of Mocha. From the firſt we bring home bullion, which leſſens the neceſſity of the export from the parent ſtate; and from the laſt, as much coffee, as ſuffices to fumigate the brains of all our ſtateſmen and politicians, from John-a-Groat's houſe to the Land's End. To the ſouthward, not a Prince on the Malabar coaſt, but reſpects our national flag, and ſupplies us with the beſt pepper and cardamums in the world, cheaper, and in greater abundance, than to any other people. March out of our factories of Tellicherry, Calicut, and Anjango, and attempt a conqueſt of the countries round about, and the natives will firſt reſiſt, then deſpiſe, and at length expel us: or if we barely keep footing, as our contemporaries and rivals, the Portugueze at Goa, the French at Mahie, and the Dutch at Cochin, they will lay us under contributions, and treat us with the contempt ſuch impolitic infatuation deſerves.

From Bombay Iſland to the eaſtward, over all the Mahratta dominions, our broad cloth, copper, iron, lead, ironmongery, and hard ware, is permitted

permitted to pass from province to province, without the least obstruction, after having paid an impost of three per cent. which is but just the half of what the Company themselves charge as duty, on the importation of those articles of British manufacture at Bombay. To the west, on the other side the Indian Ocean, there is not a port on the coast of Arabia, Abyssinia, and Africa, to which we do not trade with safety; and receive from them, for the Europe and China market, assafœtida, dragons blood, verdigrease, aloes, together with olibanum, myrrh, and several other aromatic gums. What more do we want? Mistress of the seas, protectors of fair traders, and scourge of pirates. Can we, as British subjects, wish, or obtain, a more glorious or enviable situation? If more of the productions of the kingdoms and states situated on the west side of the great Asiatic peninsula, commonly called India, are wanting for our trade to any country on the west side the Cape of Good Hope, we have but to say so, and they will be provided. Where then is the use of military triumph, and useless conquests? Are not the appellations of merchants, friends, and protectors, preferable to those of freebooters, enemies, and destroyers? I pass now from the Malabar to the Coromandel coast, and in my way, cast an eye of pity and compassion, on the miserable inhabitants of the Island of Ceylon, held in a state of most grievous slavery, that the Dutch may have the sole

priviledge

priviledge of ſerving the reſt of the world with cinnamon. It is impoſſible to conſider the ſituation, extent, fertility, and numerous conveniencies of this beautiful Iſland, without ſeeing that it was intended by providence to be the mercantile miſtreſs of the Indian Ocean. There is not an article of Aſiatic merchandize, that it would not produce; hath ſeveral good ports, and one of the fineſt harbours in the world; but not a veſſel belonging to it, but a few of the worſt conſtructed fiſhing boats in the univerſe, in which the wretched natives are ſent to fiſh for their inhuman tyrants. Did their maſters permit thoſe miſerable beings to make their fiſhing craft more uſeful or commodious, they would ſerve them for the means of eſcape from their tyranny. They are not even permitted to approach any veſſel which paſſes the coaſt, to benefit by changing their fiſh for ſugar, rice, or any other of the neceſſaries of life. The haughty Republicans fix the galling yoke of ſlavery on the necks of a nation of inoffenſive Aſiatics, who never could have injured them, but would not ſuffer the Spaniſh tyrant to treat them in the ſame way.—Pedling monopolizers of all the ſpices, your meaſure of inequity is not yet full.

The Engliſh held on the coaſt of Coromandel, beſides their preſidency of Madraſs, the town of Cudalore, under the protection of Fort St. David. The French had taken the former from them, du-

ring the war which commenced in the year 1743. This, with ſome grants they had obtained from the Subahs of the Decan, had given a ſpur to the military ſpirit, which, in its courſe, for ever deſtroys the mercantile. Madraſs had been reſtored by the peace of Aix-la-Chapelle; but the French, grown impatient for conqueſt and dominion, were become troubleſome and uneaſy neighbours, whoſe views were plainly to engroſs the whole of the confidence of the Princes of the country. To Mr. Orm's Hiſtory of the Carnatic, I refer thoſe who wiſh to ſee their proceedings in full detail. Preſervation of their own rights, and legally obtained priviledges, firſt called the Engliſh to the field. It was a war of ſelf defence, and therefore juſtifiable by all laws, human and divine. At the peace of Paris, the Engliſh were on the Coromandel coaſt, in the ſituation the French had been in at the peace of Aix-la-Chapelle. A reſtleſs military ſpirit, and total neglect of their mercantile intereſts, ruined the latter. I hope the former will advert to the cauſes of the ruin of their rivals, and benefit from it, by looking back in time to firſt principles. If the Company's annual balance ſheet of profit and loſs by their trade on the Coromandel coaſt, were to be cloſely examined, it would be found, that their gains were greater in the fifteen years which preceded the loſs of Madraſs, than they have been in the fifteen years which have elapſed ſince the capture of Pondicherry. What good purpoſe then

can

can it anſwer, that we go on to gratify the Nabob Mahommed Ally Cawn, in depopulating the country, in order to extend his dominions? If, with the poſſeſſion of two well ſituated towns on the ſea coaſt, and the character of opulent, reſponſible, and fair merchants, every good national purpoſe could be effected, what end doth it anſwer, that we ſtrain ourſelves to the utmoſt extent of our power, at a great expence of Engliſh blood and Engliſh honour, to obtain, on falſe principles, what is ſo eaſily to be obtained on true? Let us examine the conduct, as merchants, we ought to have purſued, after the peace of Paris, and compare it with that our military phrenſy hath forced us into, and ſee whether it is not proper for us to acknowledge the miſtakes we have made, and correct our conduct in time, to avoid the conſequences.

The peace of Paris left us in full and entire poſſeſſion of all the coaſt of Coromandel, except the ruins of Pondicherry. There is not a doubt, but that in the long and bloody war in the Carnatic, great injuſtice had at times, been done to many of the petty Princes; nor was it until the general peace, in our power fully to adminiſter juſtice. We had experience enough of the deſpotic principles of the Aſiatic Princes. Inſtead of encouraging this diſpoſition in the Prince we had ſet up, we ſhould, on principles of common equity, have

played

played them one againſt the other, by doing right to the whole. The ſurrounding Princes, feeling the effects of our impartial diſtribution of juſtice, would have been content with their own rights, and ſtood in awe of our power. Our own Nabob ſhould have been made to know, that the days of miſery, devaſtation, and oppreſſion, were paſt and done away; that peace and juſtice were reſtored; that he muſt turn his mind to ſetling his country, by encouraging the arts of peace. Agriculture ſhould have been encouraged, manufactures protected, and ſecurity inſured to the lives and properties of all his ſubjects. Such a conduct had been eaſy for us to have purſued; and ſuch conduct would have prevented the cruel ravages, different meaſures have ſince brought on the provinces by the Madura war, the invaſion of Hyder Ally, and deſtruction of the kingdom of Tanjour, which have more than once, brought our affairs on the coaſt to the brink of ruin. Some individuals, no doubt, made great fortunes; and the fooliſh and oſtentatious diſplay they made of them on their return to their native country, gave the Miniſtry an itching to come in for a ſhare. Sir John Lindſey was ſent out as an Ambaſſador from the Crown. The Nabob, like a true eaſtern deſpot, took up the idea of playing off the King againſt the Company, that is, the Engliſh nation againſt itſelf. Inſtead of reſiding in the center of his dominions, and employing himſelf in the government of his country, on

found

found principles, he ſpent his money and time, caballing and intriguing with the King's officers, and Company's ſervants, at Madraſs. An alarm was taken at home; and Lord Pigot, on his coming out, received inſtructions to find the means, by reſtoring the Tanjorean Prince to his dominions, and by other ways, to ſet ſome bounds to the reſtleſs, ambitious deſigns of the Nabob; but it was too late; the military ſpirit had deſtroyed the mercantile; and Lord Pigot, in attempting to execute his orders, was diveſted of his government, confined under a military guard, and the moment I am now writing, it is reported at Bengal, that the uſurpers intend to ſend him by force on board ſhip, in order to his going to Europe.

Will any man deny, that on the coaſt of Coromandel, the Engliſh Company, or their ſervants, are purſuing the ſame ſteps, which heretofore brought ruin on the Portugueze* and the French, and which has made the Dutch ſettlements ripe for deſtruction? The Carnatic Nabob is wily, treacherous, and revengeful. The Princes round about are diſſatisfied with our conduct, and alarmed and diſguſted by his power. Hyder Ally, his rival, and the enemy of every European nation, is buſy in deſtroying the Dutch ſettlements in the King of Cochin's dominions; and Monſieur, at the French Iſlands, is not yet quite ready to take advantage of our egregious folly and miſconduct. I hope no

fear

fear which my friends may feel on my account, will cauſe them to ſuppreſs theſe Letters. If I muſt ſuffer for ſpeaking truth, let it come as it may; I am prepared for it with that invulnerable conſciouſneſs of integrity, which malice cannot reach. It wants not the claſſical diction of a Junius, or the well turned periods of a Johnſon, to convey plain truths to the public. The ſoundneſs of the reaſoning will fix the attention too cloſe to the matter, to leave time for, or raiſe inclination in the ſenſible reader, to cavil at the incorrectneſs of the language. At no period of time ſince the laſt peace, hath the Company's affairs on the Coromandel coaſt, been in ſo much diſorder and confuſion, as they are at this juncture. The Nabob is indebted immenſe ſums to individuals, who are ſcrambling for it. He is greatly in arrears of pay to his troops. The country is diſtreſſed in every province, and the Company's expences exceed their income. Diſcipline is relaxed; anarchy in the council; an active enemy on the coaſt, who will not miſs the opportunity to attempt the recovery of their power; the preſent managers at Madraſs deſpied, and an empty treaſury. What all this will produce, is not difficult to foreſee, nor eaſy to prevent. But as ſome remedy muſt be attempted for theſe growing evils, I think it impoſſible the great points can be miſtaken. The Nabob muſt be ſent to reſide at Arcot, and reſtricted to correſpond with Governor and Council only, not with them as individuals. His

ambitious

ambitious plans and ſchemes of extending his dominions, counteracted, by ſtrict and impartial juſtice being rendered to the ſurrounding Princes, who now dread his power, and doubt our honeſty; the military ſpirit ſo much repreſſed, as to reduce it to an implicit obedience to the civil power; and the King's officers in command of the ſquadron, confined to the care of their own element. I will not doubt the abilities of *Sir Robert Harland*, *Sir John Lindſey*, and *Sir Edward Hughes*, to command a ſquadron of the King's ſhips, nor in this place contend, that they ever ſhewed the leaſt improper attention to their own intereſts; but I will doubt their capacities and abilities, of entering into political intrigues with an artful eaſtern Prince, which can produce either honour or advantage to their King or country. That I may not be miſapprehended by thoſe great ſea officers or their friends, I mean by the words *improper attention to their own intereſts*, a moſt ſcandalous inattention to the means uſed by the agent victuallers, in providing proviſion for the ſquadron, and the rates they charge them at to government. I hope this hint, however untimely introduced, may be of ſome uſe to my hardly dealt with honeſt countrymen, the common ſeamen, navigating the King's ſhips on duty in the Indian Ocean.

It is ſurpriſing to ſee what poor mercantile returns this whole coaſt hath ever made to the Engliſh

lish nation. A man who has read of the bloody conflicts, the sieges, the sea engagements, the loss of men, and consumption of money, that the wars with the French in the Carnatic, has cost the English nation, would naturally imagine, that immense advantages must have accrued from the peaceable possession of this whole coast, from Point Palmiras to Ceylon, for so long a term of years. To set him right, I refer him to the Company's accounts, which, after he has perused, my word for it, he will come over to my opinion, that the Company, by their present policy, are but digging a grave for the national commerce on the coast of Coromandel: And if they injudiciously permit the present growing military spirit at Bombay, to induce them to quit the Island of Salset, and plant the national colours on the continent on that side the peninsula, the whole of their possessions in Asia, will be involved in war, anarchy, and desolation.*

I AM convinced that the observation continually in the mouths of some leading men abroad, is erroneous, viz. that we have gone too far to retreat with safety, and that to secure what we have, it is absolutely necessary to conquer, or disable, every principal power on the continent, within the latitude of twenty-six degrees north, that is, from Allahabad west, to the River Indus. The more

*This was written in 1776.

northern

northern nations will never permit this; or if they should, what good purpose will it answer? Can the parent state permit such an annual drain of her subjects, as will be necessary to hold in obedience, such an extent of dominion? Or will the possession of it increase your national trade? I believe quite the reverse. For if causes exactly similar, and in similar situations, produce the same effects, is it not natural to conclude, that in the attempt you will meet the same fate the other European nations have met before you?

In opposition to the foregoing observation, I will risk another, which, with some few exceptions, and those owing to our untoward situation in the Carnatic, will, I am persuaded, suit the national interest much better; and that is, that except in the provinces now held by the English in Bengal, the national flag should never be seen flying on the continent of India, out of sight of the sea shore; within that distance, all the merchants, and merchandizes we want, are to be found. Our intercourse with the natives, should be in the quality of merchants; whilst it is continued on that principle, it will be useful to the nation; change the principle, and the advantages are no more.

The trade to China, considered in a national view, is rather a commerce of necessity than of choice. We import her articles of luxury, to prevent

vent our neighbours from ſmuggling them in upon us. As to their raw ſilk, I think I could make it appear, that the importation of it into England, might be leſſened, or even done without. But when I come to treat of the trade to Aſia in detail, as I ſhall conſider the Company's trade to China, rather as a channel, by which a remittance may be made of the balances due from the neat proceeds of their eſtates in India, than in any other point of view, I ſhall leave it as a matter not very material to my general plan, whether raw ſilk be, or not, part of the returning cargoes of the China ſhips.

I RETURN home again to Bengal: The acquiſition and peaceable poſſeſſion of its provinces, properly managed, will become a great ſource of wealth, power, and grandeur, to Great Britain. Its barrier lines have been drawn by nature, and are now occupied by the Company. The extreme indolence, inſignificance, and folly, of Mirza Amanna, the ſucceſſor of the Vizier Sujah ul Dowlah, may make it neceſſary, in a political point of view, for us to dry nurſe the ideot; and the collections in Cheet Sing's country may be uſeful, as it contributes to pay the troops ſtationed on the barrier, without ſending more money from our own provinces. But was I to draw my mercantile line, it ſhould be for ever confined within the Caramnaſſa. The provinces of Bengal and Bahar, and part of Oriſſa, contain every thing we want as a trading people;

nor

nor whilſt we continue reaſonable, juſt, and quiet neighbours, will the ſurrounding potentates ever dare to diſturb our repoſe. The French may wiſh to do it; but whilſt we continue at peace, and in friendſhip, with the Princes of Hindooſtan, their utmoſt efforts muſt prove feeble and ineffectual. What a noble field is here prepared for a genius like that of Mr. Haſtings, to exert his talents in! Away with political chicanery, deſpotic, or Machiavelian principles; Chriſtian charity, juſtice, moderation, and mercantile probity, are all we want.

One of the ancient lawgivers, or philoſophers, whoſe name and country I have forgot, held that citizen to be highly reprehenſible, who poſſeſſed talents for public buſineſs, if he kept aloof from the ſervice of the ſtate. With what indignation would the old ſage, if he lived in our days, view a ſet of men, forcing themſelves into the direction of affairs of the higheſt importance to their country, without poſſeſſing one ſingle qualification neceſſary for its proper management! If there are on the liſt of Directors, men ſo totally unfit to ſuperintend the Company's affairs, that they know nothing of the Company's political, civil, or mercantile intereſt; who hardly know the names of the goods they either export or import; who are ignorant of the very complexion of the people to whoſe country they are ſent to, or brought from; and are as well acquainted with the inhabitants of the moon, as they

are with the power, character, intereſt, or connection, of the Princes of Hindooſtan, or of the geographical ſituation of the countries the Company poſſeſs; if there are, I ſay, any of that old leaven left, whoſe ignorance and ſervility, ſecured them an annual ſeat, in the deſpotic reigns of Colebrooke, Bolton, and their predeceſſors, (ſome one of whom aſked the intrepid hero Clive, whether *Sir Roger Dowlat*, as he called *Sujah ul Dowlah*, was not a ***Baronet*;) if there are, I repeat, let them take ſhame to themſelves, and withdraw before the day comes, when the great national queſtion ſhall be debated, whether a new charter ſhall be granted to the Eaſt India Company, or not: for I have my fears, that were thoſe *experienced men* to be examined before the Houſe of Commons, their extreme ignorance would cauſe a negative to be put on the queſtion.

I HAVE, Sir, made a moſt extravagant excurſion, but it is with intent to take a curſory view of the Company's ſettlements in India. I have done now with digreſſion, and promiſe you, in my future Letters, to keep cloſer to the original intention of them, which was to treat of the nature and conſequences of the Engliſh trade to India. If I have deviated from my plan, it was becauſe, in the pur-

*The ignorance of the general run of the Directors, as to the Company's political intereſt in Aſia, cannot be more ſtrongly verified, than that of a late Chairman, aſking who the NIZAM was, ſo often mentioned in the affair of Sir Thomas Rumbold.

ſuit

ſuit of it, I found the Company had deviated in many important inſtances, from their firſt principles. I wiſh to ſee them brought back before it is too late. The approaching period will be favourable for it. Whether you are recalled from your government, by the power of faction, or not, you muſt labour in laying the foundation of this great national edifice. The corner ſtone in the Aſiatic ſection, muſt be laid in the provinces of Bengal; and who ſo proper to do it as yourſelf, who have ſpent the greateſt and beſt part of your life there, in the ſervice of your country? For the mercantile department, I will give you all the aſſiſtance I can. If I am capable of labouring at all at the pen, I will attend cloſely to this ſubject, and it ſhall be done in my deſcription of the importance of the Bengal trade to the mercantile intereſt of Great Britain, on which I ſhall treat in my Fourth Letter. In the interim, I remain,

HONOURABLE SIR,

&c. &c.

LETTER IV.

LETTER IV.

FROM A

FREE MERCHANT in BENGAL,

TO

WARREN HASTINGS, *Esq.*

HONOURABLE SIR;

I am now ſet down to begin my Fourth Letter to you, which is to contain the firſt ſketch of my plan for connecting the Company's trade to and from India, in ſuch a manner, as will make it moſt conducive to the national intereſt and honour, as well as to the pecuniary advantages of the Eaſt India Company themſelves.

In all commercial, as well as political concerns, conſtant and regular intelligence is abſolutely neceſſary. When the Company were ſimply a commercial body, and had no political concerns in Aſia, the

the detaining their ſhips a few weeks now and then, for their letters of advice, invoices, and other mercantile documents, was ſometimes unavoidable: But now they have ſuch valuable poſſeſſions, and ſuch intereſting political concerns blended with their mercantile, it certainly is very abſurd to have no regular and eſtabliſhed modes of conveyance for their important diſpatches, than by ſuch heavy unweildy machines, as are their deep loaded merchantmen, which I have very frequently known lay ready loaded near a month, at the riſk of a cargo worth, in Europe, 200,000*l.* ſterling, and at a demurrage of 20*l.* per diem, waiting until the ſervants abroad had done wrangling, and writing minutes againſt one another, that the papers might be cloſed ; and this happens every year at ſome, if not at all their preſidencies in India. I am aware that it will be ſaid, that the Company have their Eagle, their Mercury, and their Lapwing packets, which they diſpatch on emergent occaſions. I admit they have ſuch veſſels ; but by ſome ſtrange fatality, thoſe veſſels have been conſidered as mere ſinecures to the captains, or machines in the hands of party. Should this be denied, I refer to the diſpatches ſent out on thoſe improper veſſels called packets, for ſeven years paſt, and if, on ſuch retroſpective inveſtigation, it be not found, that they have always been uſed, more for the purpoſe of gratifying a party, than for the real uſe of the Company, I ſhall be content to be laughed at. Even this moment,

we

we in Bengal, are gaping for the arrival of the Eagle packet, with the news of the recall of Meſſrs. Haſtings and Barwell, and the appointment of General Clavering to the government, as has been hinted in all the public and private letters by the Bengal ſhips, which left England between the months of January and May, 1776. But ſhould the miniſterial veterans in Leadenhall-Street, fail in this their attempt, I here venture to prophecy, that the Eagle will not be diſpatched at all: or if ſhe be, the papers ſhe will bring, will be duplicates, or ſome unmeaning new orders, ſent juſt to ſave appearances. Is it not to be lamented, that the paſſions and prejudices of whole bodies of men, as well as thoſe of individuals, are to be managed, and brought over to act ſuch mean and ſervile parts, even in affairs of a public nature, and of the utmoſt importance, entruſted to their care, as well as in their own private concerns?

THAT the Company's, and national concerns in Aſia, is of ſufficient conſequence for them to be at the expence of eſtabliſhing a regular correſpondence, will not be controverted; and I, who, on national principles, am an advocate for conducting this trade by means of a company ſimilar to that now exiſting, muſt admit, that the expence of ſuch correſpondence ſhould be borne by the Company. I therefore think, that a ſufficient number of frigates ſhould be built, each mounting twenty guns, and

and of ſuch conſtruction, as to inſure their being prime ſailers; and that one of theſe frigates ſhould ſail from Plymouth, or ſome other convenient port in the Channel, every three months, with all advices of importance; that is to ſay, on the following days; the firſt of January, April, July, and October; and this in times of peace conſtantly, and without the leaſt deviation. By theſe regular packets, all papers, political, military, and judicial, might be ſent, as well as duplicates of mercantile ones; and let the mere merchant ſhips proceed out and home, as ſoon as they are loaded, with their own documents. The only material objection to this, would be the expence of keeping eight ſuch veſſels as mentioned above, in conſtant pay, for this particular purpoſe. To obviate that, I boldly affirm, that was all the money paid by the Company for theſe ten years paſt, for the demurrage of their ſhips, ariſing entirely from their detention on account of public papers, and the ſum total divided into ten equal ſhares, one of thoſe ſhares would amount to more, than would anſwer the expence of eight ſuch packet boats annually. But there are many other ſolid reaſons for ſuch an eſtabliſhment, which muſt, without my aſſiſtance, occur to every man, who is poſſeſſed with the neceſſary abilities to qualify him for being elected into the direction, to ſuperintend the Company's political and commercial affairs.

The packets which may be dispatched in January and April, would pass the Cape of Good Hope in time to go what is called the inward passage to India, and might be ordered to land the papers for Bombay at Anjango, then proceed to Madrass and Bengal. The first of these would return again to Madrass, to sail from thence on the first of October for Europe; the second in January; and so on in continual rotation. As some one of the ports in the Channel, should be the place from whence the packet should regularly sail every three months from Europe to India, so should Madrass be the place from whence the packet should sail from India to Europe, with regular dispatches from all the presidencies. The time for the packets to leave Europe for India, and India for Europe, I have fixed to the same days, as it suits extremely well with the seasons of the year. It will seldom happen that more than two will be at the same time on their passage out or home; so that there will be at all times one, and mostly two, of these vessels in Europe, as well as in India, preparing to take their tour out or home. Nor should their time of sailing be altered on any account, as the Company's servants at the different factories, would be sure to find a vessel at the stated time, ready to carry home their dispatches. There could be no kind of excuse for their omitting to send by them, a clear and concise statement of the Company's affairs under their management.

Besides the demurrage on the large ſhips mentioned above, the great charge which the Company are frequently put to, by their ſervants ſending veſſels from Bombay to Buſſorah with packets, will alſo be ſaved. To this may be added a general poſtage on all letters out and home, ſhould that be thought expedient. But my plan has its foundation in matters of more conſequence, than a regulation of poſtage. If the political and commercial intereſts of the Company in Aſia, will not bear the charge of a regular correſpondence, I know not what will. The neceſſity and utility of the meaſure muſt ſtrike at once, and render all arguments to the contrary inſignificant, which ſhall be grounded on a falſe and pedling economy.

I am not unaware, that ſuch a regular and methodical eſtabliſhment, would often, in time of war, from neceſſity, be broken in upon; but this doth not make it the leſs uſeful: and, for advices from Europe to India, there is another channel, which, though it was not diſcovered in your government, yet has by your means been re-explored, and its utility well aſcertained; I mean by the Arabian Gulf and Red Sea. In no period of time, hath there been an inſtance of ſuch amazing diſpatch, in the conveyance of advice from one part of the world to another, as what has happened here. A letter dated in London the 24th of May, 1776, was received at Calcutta, in Bengal, on the 14th

day

day of Auguſt following. Its rout was from London to Marſeilles, to Alexandria, to Cairo, to Suez, and Bengal. In war time, the French, and other powers on the continent, may give ſome interruption to the progreſs of advices over land; but what power can interrupt your paſſage by ſea? A frigate with advices from London to Alexandria, will meet with no other impediments in her paſſage, than what ſhe might meet with going to port Mahon. The Company's marine force at Bombay, commands the Red Sea. And though the neceſſary delay, cauſed by the eſtabliſhed quarantine, would impede your advices from India to Europe, it would not be the caſe with thoſe from Europe to Aſia.

WAS I here to enter into a minute detail of the times and ſeaſons, in which it would be proper to order veſſels on ſuch ſervice, or to name the places where to fix agents, to conduct this part of the plan of correſpondence, it would lead me much out of my way. Many, and great inconveniencies, have ariſen heretofore, for want of ſuch eſtabliſhment. It is eaſy to prevent them from happening again, when ever the narrow, confined, pedling, 'Change-Alley principle of conducting the Company's affairs, ſhall be entirely expelled the heads and hearts of the managers in Leadenhall-Street.

MAHARAJA SERF

I WILL explain myſelf, to prevent the preſent Court of Directors from imagining I mean them. That is impoſſible; for I have read the late Act of Parliament, for regulating the Eaſt India Company's affairs; ſince the paſſing of which, the ſecreting, or keeping private, good or bad advices from India, until ſtock could be bought in or ſold out, will not now anſwer the purpoſe; and men will always do their duty, when there is no temptation to the contrary. When I ſhall take occaſion to mention any vile act of ſelfiſh miſmanagement, which betrays a breach of truſt, or ignominious proſtitution of commercial probity, ſuch as the above noted, formerly well known practice, I hope the Proprietors, Directors, &c. will underſtand it as alluding to things paſt, and not at all applicable to preſent men, or preſent meaſures. Or if by accident, I ſhould touch a ſore part (for long habit is a kind of ſecond nature) they have only to omit the practice in future, and all will go well. I own I want to ſee this great branch of national commerce, conducted on the moſt noble principles of national utility, and national honour. There is no uſe for 'change-broker cunning. All that will be neceſſary for us in future, in the conducting of the Company's affairs, is common ſenſe and common honeſty. If theſe virtues are not to be found among twenty-four properly choſen mercantile managers, in charge of the Company's affairs, it is not eaſy to ſay where they are to be found. I be-

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lieve the manner in which the Company now freight their ſhips, for the purpoſe of carrying on their trade to Aſia, is liable to as many objections, as any mode which can poſſibly be deviſed. There is alſo, ſome objections to the diſpoſal of them. A ruling man ſhall procure a ſon, a nephew, or ſervile dependant, any voyage he chooſes. This is an unfair influence, and in its conſequences, hurtful to the ſervice: It is preferring the intereſt of individuals to the common good, which a Director is ſworn not to do. The remedy is at hand, equitable and eaſy. The homeward bound ſhips take their turn for being taken again into the ſervice, from the date of their arrival at St. Helena, at which Iſland all the Company's ſhips touch, in their way home from every part of Aſia. Why not let the owners of thoſe ſhips chooſe the voyage for their ſhip, as it comes to their turn? Or the captains of the ſhips taken up in one year, or at one time, draw lots for their reſpective voyages? This would obviate many inconveniencies, which ariſe from the preſent partial mode. In its proper place, I will conſider whether it would not be more for the intereſt of the Company, to allow annual ſalaries to their captains and officers, in lieu of private trade; and theſe to be increaſed in proportion to the rank in the ſervice, &c. Their preſent mode of pretending to reſtrict private trade, by teſt oaths, and venal officers, cauſes a great and uſeleſs conſumption of the national morality.

In order to keep up their intereſt, Colebrooke, and other deſpots of the times, preceding the year 1774, permitted more ſhips to be built and freighted, by one third, than were wanting for the ſervice. They run the Company in debt to the government, the bank, and the freight owners; imported more tea than Europe could drink, or America drown; and then piouſly laid all the blame on their ſervants abroad.

In order to reduce the ſurplus tonnage, the ſtate limited the Directors to a certain number of ſhips. The officers were put out of employment, and the captains, without being invalids, became penſioners on the Company. Thus were violent remedies become neceſſary to correct abuſes, which men, void of public ſpirit, had ſelfiſhly introduced into the management of the Company's affairs.

I have ſaid in a former Letter, that one million and a half of the manufactures of the mother country, may be annually, and with great advantage, ſent to the Eaſt Indies; and that the returns ariſing from the ſales of the outward bound cargoes, together with the neat proceeds of the Company's eſtates in India, would be ſufficient to ſupply returns in the rich merchandize of Aſia, that ſhould produce, free of all kinds of expences, 4,500,000*l.* in Europe. It is impoſſible to explain this, but by regular ſtatements of the invoices and account ſales,

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of the cargoes both out and home. I ſhall, therefore, arrange them in proper order, either at the end of this Letter, or in a number by itſelf; and to that I refer the reader for the proof of my aſſertions.

The Company's apparent neceſſary expences, for conducting their affairs in Europe, are very moderate; but from the partial, or injudicious arrangement of their ſhips, they, in many inſtances, are at great expences, which are altogether uſeleſs, and every year amount to immenſe ſums of money.

The firſt inſtance of partiality, or inattention, I ſhall mention, is the management of what is called their Bombay and Mocha ſhip. This ſhip, from the time ſhe is firſt taken into the ſervice to carry goods to Bombay, and load home from Mocha with a cargo of coffee, to the time ſhe is diſcharged, conſumes full two years. Add to this another year, which, by the cuſtom of the ſervice, elapſes before ſhe can be again employed. How then can the owners let the ſhip to freight on reaſonable terms, without being loſers by the bargain? The truth of the matter is, the Captain's intereſt ſuperſedes the Company's; and in order that he may gain five thouſand pounds, the Company are put to the expence of twenty. For the ſhip employs three years in effecting what ought to be done in eighteen months, as will appear by the following ſimple detail of the fact.

THE ſhips for the year, are generally nominated in the month of July, and their deſtination fixed. The owners ſet about to prepare them; and in the month of February or March following, the Bombay and Mocha ſhip ſets ſail, and generally arrives at Bombay in the month of Auguſt. Here the Captain (for he is always a favourite) is permitted to idle away his time for three or four months. The amount of his private adventure, often exceeds the amount invoice of the Company's goods ſent on the ſame ſhip. It is ſeldom leſs than ten, and often more than thirty thouſand pounds. If he gets his own buſineſs done ſooner than it is neceſſary for him to go to Surat, in his way to Mocha, he is indulged with a voyage to the Malabar coaſt, under pretence of bringing up ſome of the Company's pepper, which, by the bye, ought to be left on the coaſt, and taken at once on board, by the ſhips homeward bound. But this man, ſay the Governor and Council, is in great favour with the leading Directors, and muſt be ſerved. He will make two or three thouſand pounds by the trip, and be time enough for Mocha. On his return from the coaſt, he is ſent to Surat, where the ſhip takes in ſome trifling quantity of goods on the Company's account, and is filled up with the Captain's, or freight which goes on board, under the denomination of the Captain's private trade, and on the ſecurity of which, he lends his money at a high premium, payable at Mocha. On his arrival there, a

factory is opened with great pomp and parade, and a table kept for three Supercargoes, who have been sent out of Europe, or appointed from Bombay.— To do what? Why really nothing: For the Company's Hindoo Broker provides the coffee. The Captain and Supercargoes, who, in this voyage, are always joint traders, before they leave Bombay, obtain permission to use their own money to pay for the coffee, and draw bills, at high exchange, in their own favour, on the presidency at Bombay, to which place they return in the month of August, ready loaded for Europe; but do not quit Bombay until November, and generally arrive at home in May; and by the month of July, the ship is delivered back to her owners; nor will it come in time for her to be taken up until the following season— And this is called management! In the space of three years, this ship is once completely loaded for the Company, and that is homeward bound with coffee, because the freight is paid on the returning cargo, and that saves the owners, who never concern themselves whether the Captain or Company have the use of the ship out, or whilst she is abroad. From the first to the last of this branch of the Company's commerce, there is a most notorious sacrifice made of the public interest to that of individuals. Indeed it runs so completely through the whole of the management of the Company's affairs in Europe, that I am almost sick with the thoughts of the numberless instances I shall be obliged to produce in

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these Letters. Such an expoſition of notorious mal-adminiſtration, brought home in ſo great a variety of inſtances, looks like invective, or even defamation; and I expect to be outlawed, proſcribed, and even burnt in effigy, for daring to utter ſuch biting truths, which cannot be evaded, or denied, as they are to be found in every page of the Company's records. Whilſt you, the Captains, Owners, Ships Huſbands, Proprietors, and Directors, look there for them, I will go on to tell you how, in juſtice to your employers, and to the ſtate, you ought to manage the coffee trade.

A SHIP load in two years, is, I think, all you want for national conſumption. How it happens that it coſts you ſo much, that you cannot ſell at a price low enough to induce re exportation, may be diſcovered by a careful attention to the facts related in the foregoing paragraphs; nor will you be able to gain any thing by this trade on your preſent plan: but as half a cargo, or two thouſand bales of Mocha coffee, imported annually, is all that we want at preſent, let us ſee what a difference it will make to us, when it is imported at leſs than half the preſent expence.

IT matters very little, whether we keep one of the Bombay ſervants as an agent at Mocha, or not, as far as it relates to the procuring of a cargo of coffee; for the Hindoo, who is the Company's

Broker, and under whofe protection he refides among a nation of bigotted Mahometans, in great credit, eafe, and grandeur, will, as now, with the Captain and Supercargoes, in fact, tranfact the bufinefs.

THE country fhips which trade from Surat and Bombay, to Mocha and Juddah, carry very rich cargoes, confifting of grain, piece goods, fpice, and fugar. There are in Arabia, very few articles of merchandize, with which they can load home to advantage, fo that they generally return in ballaft. The owners of thefe fhips, will very readily fupply your agent at Mocha with money, for bills at par, to fave the rifk, and bring over on freight to Bombay, as much coffee as you want, on the moft moderate terms. I infift on it, that the government of Bombay, may contract with very refponfible people, to fupply the money at Mocha, and bring over the coffee annually, at lefs expence than it now cofts the Company, for factory charges, and Supercargoes table expences, and have it ready at Bombay in the month of September. Your coffee fhip, which arrives there in Auguft, may return to Europe in the November following, with as much coffee as you want, and complete her cargo with Surat piece goods. In this manner the fame fhip will make two complete voyages to Bombay, in the fpace of time which is now felfifhly confumed in effecting one.

Nothing can be more irkſome than I find this part of my plan. The Company will want to conduct their trade, about twenty-four ſhips annually, excluſive of the packets above mentioned. In arranging of theſe ſhips, and pointing out the proper time for their ſailing, &c. I am inevitably led into a cloſe inveſtigation of the preſent conduct, in order to contraſt it with my propoſed alterations, and in ſo doing, ſuch ſcenes of ſelfiſh iniquity muſt be laid open, as will rouſe almoſt every man concerned, or employed, in the Company's ſervice in Europe, againſt me. I have but two inducements to write on this ſubject at all: The firſt is a moſt ſincere love of my country, which makes me wiſh to ſee her trade to Aſia properly conducted: The ſecond may not be altogether ſo juſtifiable, but it ariſes out of the firſt. I cannot examine to the bottom of the mean, ſelfiſh, intereſted views of the managers at home, without recollecting, that thoſe very men are many of them the ſame who raiſed ſuch a clamour againſt the Company's ſervants abroad, and to cover their own iniquity, cried out thief firſt. I ſhall, in the inveſtigation now in hand, prove, that in no part of the ſervice, has there been ſuch mal-practices, as what continues yet in uſe, in the conduct of their ſhipping; to ſay nothing of their dextrous management of contracts. Let thoſe gentlemen ſuſpend their anger, until they have refuted the charges brought againſt them, or have altered their conduct, then I ſhall

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be nothing averſe to the meeting their indignation. When they ſhall begin, as I have pointed out the way, and either import the coffee the Company want, at half the preſent expence, or make it clear to the nation, that it cannot be done, I will thank them for the firſt, or aſk their pardon if they prove the laſt. But until one or other happens, I ſhall go on to ſhew the ill effects of their management to the national intereſt, and national honour, without regarding whoſe ears it may chance to tingle.

Besides the ſhip for Bombay and Mocha, there are generally four others taken up at the ſame time, for the trade to that ſide of India. Two of theſe moſt commonly return home again directly, with piece goods and pepper. The other two are always commanded by favourites, to whoſe private intereſt the Company is for ever ſacrificed. The firſt of theſe is called the Bombay and China ſhip, and is managed on the ſame principle with the coffee trade. The Captain loads out an immenſe cargo on his own private account, in defiance of Company's officers, whom they bribe, and of teſt oaths, which cuſtom hath taught them to take with horrid indifference. From Bombay they carry to China, ſix hundred bales of cotton on account of the Company, which, by ſome ſubtle evaſion, they call the Company's tonnage, and eight hundred bales on account of the Captain, and this conſtantly, and without the leaſt variation, except that in ſome of

the large ſhips, the Captain's ſhare is ten ſixteenths of the whole tonnage of the ſhip, for which he pays not a farthing. Here *Mandeville's* maxim of *private vices public benefits*, is *reverſed*, and *public vices become private benefits*. For the Captain gains all the profits ariſing from ſuch iniquitous proceedings; and this is known to the Directors, Owners, Huſbands, &c. for a number of them have been Captains, and made their fortunes in the ſame way. A great man about Leadenhall-Street, whoſe name may remain ſnug if he ſo pleaſes, as not to wince, and thereby ſhew the ſore place, was once on a committee of enquiry, on an accuſation brought againſt a Captain from Bombay, for ſelling military ſtores to the country powers. This man, high in the direction, forgetting his own old practices, ironically aſked his brother in iniquity, "*What he had* "*gained by the ſale of his great guns?*" The Captain, who well knew that the inquiſitor had done the ſame thing at the ſame place, anſwered more truly than wiſely, "*Really, Mr. Chairman, not ſo* "*much as you did on yours by fifteen per cent.*" This ill timed repartee loſt him the command of his ſhip for ſome time; but long uſage had ſo blunted the feelings of thoſe honourable deſpots, that in a year or two, the Captain recovered his ſhip, and has ſince made a fortune *very honeſtly*, I make no doubt.

There can be no honeſt reaſon aſſigned, for continuing of this expenſive cuſtom, of ſending a ſhip by Bombay to China. The voyage from London to China, and home direct, is a voyage of twenty months; by Bombay, it is commonly from thirty-two to thirty-ſix months. What ſhe carries from Europe to Bombay, may very fairly be put on the Bombay ſhips, without overloading of them. And no one will ſay it is for the Company's intereſt, to ſend a ſhip ſuch a rout, to carry ſix hundred bales of cotton to China. But I ſhall ſet this matter in a much clearer light, when I come to that part of the plan, in which I propoſe that the Company's treaſury at China, ſhall be ſupplied by the proceeds of goods from their ſettlements in India; and that their annual China fleet ſhall ſerve as convoy homeward bound, to all the ſhips from Aſia in time of war.

The Bombay and Bengal ſhip, is governed ſo exactly on the ſame principles of the Mocha and China ones, that it would be but repeating the ſame words, to take further notice of her. I will confine myſelf to one more inſtance out of a dozen, where expenſive, dangerous, and unneceſſary voyages, are purſued purely to ſerve the Captain, and which, in their conſequences, are highly pernicious to the intereſt of the nation and the Company.

THE presidency at Madrass, have every year ready a cargo of goods for Europe, which they dispatch in the month of October. The ship destined to carry home these goods, arrives on the coast in June or July. Would not any man imagine, that this ship came fully loaded from Europe, with goods, military and marine stores, for Madrass only; and that she would be unloaded immediately, and reloaded, so as to quit the coast early in October, in order to avoid those dreadful gales, which are always to be expected on this coast, towards the end of that month, when the south-west monsoon gives place to the north-east, to the violence of which this whole coast is extremely exposed?—No such thing.—The Captain's interest for ever interposes, in gross violation of common honesty and common sense. It is managed at home, that this ship shall have some few stores for Bengal; and this justifies the rulers at that presidency, to understand the hints from home in the Captain's favour, and they let her proceed. This gives him the opportunity to load the ship with salt on his own account, with which he proceeds to the Ganges, on the very height of the south-west monsoon. His stay cannot be long, for he must beat back against the monsoon, to be in time on the coast to sell his returning cargo of rice, which is also his own, and take in his cargo for Europe. This obliges him to work his people night and day, in that inclement season, and most unwholesome time of the year; the con-

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ſequence of which is, that half of them die with fevers and bloody fluxes, and the reſt are ſo reduced, as ſcarce to be able to work the ſhip to the coaſt. Since I have been in India, no leſs than five of theſe ſhips have been loſt, either in going down to Bengal, working back at ſo improper a ſeaſon, or by the monſoon overtaking them before they were ready to quit the coaſt. When had they continued at Madraſs, the peoples lives would have been ſaved, and the ſhip would have left the coaſt in due ſeaſon, with a rich undamaged cargo for Europe.

Let us ſee what is the advantage the Company is ſuppoſed to draw by her proceeding on to Bengal. Why firſt ſhe has ſome ſtores for that preſidency, which muſt be ſent down. I will not ſtoop to a controverſy with a paltry clerk at the India Houſe, to point out for what ſiniſter motives, a ſhip intended for Madraſs only, came to have goods on board for Bengal, becauſe I know the thing will ſay, as ſhe was taken up for Coaſt and Bay, ſhe muſt proceed to the Bay.—Let his maſters bluſh for abuſing their employers, and the nation in general, with ſuch unmeaning jargon, and in future, take away the plea for ſuch unjuſtifiable proceedings, and freight the ſhip for Madraſs only. But I will admit that it may happen now and then, that the Madraſs October ſhip may have ſtores, or goods, on board for Bengal. Do not all the Bengal ſhips, deliver troops, goods, and ſtores, at Madraſs?

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Are they not there on their way to Bengal at the ſame time? And cannot the ſtores, if by accident the Madraſs ſhip has any for Bengal, be ſent on board them? Yes, they may—But then the ſhip wants her ſalt petre for ballaſt, and muſt go to Bengal for it.—I anſwer, the more ſhame for the managers—Why is it not ready at Madraſs? Every year the preſidency at Bengal, ſend round to Bombay, ſeveral thouſand bags of ſalt petre, to ballaſt home the ſhips from that preſidency: can they not do the ſame to Madraſs, which lays not one third of the diſtance from them? I anſwer the queſtion myſelf; they can, with great eaſe, and at little expence. But if they do it without orders, ſome favourite Captains will loſe the opportunity of loading the ſhip down to the Bay, with ſalt, and back to Madraſs with rice, for his own emolument; which hath hitherto been a ſufficient reaſon for riſking the Owner's ſhip, Company's cargo, and the lives of the crew. The facts I here relate, and thoſe I ſhall relate, are ſo notorious, that I will wager my life to a golden pippin, if my friend will but cauſe theſe Letters to be publiſhed, the managers will never dare to permit them in future;* in which caſe, I ſhall be the cauſe of ſaving ſome hundred thouſands of pounds to the public, and

*Here the author was a little miſtaken: favourite Captains continue to exiſt; and ſhips are directed to be ſent certain voyages, to ſerve them as heretofore.

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the lives of many of my worthy countrymen, the common tars; which laſt conſideration is of ſo refreſhing a nature, that, without poſſeſſing ſixpence in the world, I feel myſelf out of the reach of, and looking down on the whole tribe of ignorant, ſelfiſh managers, that have reigned deſpotically in Leadenhall-Street, from the days of Child, to thoſe of Colebrooke.

Let no man, after this, fall into the miſtake which I have done, and promiſe to conclude his lucubrations in one or two Letters, when he propoſes to treat on ſo unbounded a ſcience as commerce; for if he knows any thing at all of the ſubject, new thoughts will ariſe, and new matter fall in, that will lead him often into unavoidable digreſſion. I now plainly perceive, that to treat the ſubject of national commerce to Aſia, in the detail I propoſe, of examining into every branch of the Company's management in Europe and in Aſia, will require much more room, than I at firſt imagined.

When I had written ſo far, I had occaſion to aſk a gentleman, if he remembered in what year the Engliſh firſt traded to Bengal. He referred me to the Hiſtory of the Eaſt and Weſt Indies, lately tranſlated from the French by J. Juſtamond. I procured the work, and was ſo ſtruck with the great abilities of the author, on peruſing the two

firſt

firſt books of his firſt volume, as they are tranſlated by Juſtamond, that had it been in my power to have recalled my firſt Letter, which had gone to Europe on the ſhip Triton, Captain Elphinſtone, or my ſecond and third, which I had forwarded on the London, Captain Webb, I really believe I ſhould have committed the whole to the flames, as a very flamy piece of buſineſs. But they were gone paſt recall, and I entered on the peruſal of his third book, which treats of the firſt riſe and progreſs of the Engliſh trade to Aſia, with ſuch high expectations of finding every thing ſaid, which poſſibly could be ſaid on the ſubject, that I concluded, it would put an end for ever, to my having further thoughts of writing on a ſubject, already ſo copiouſly treated by ſo able a penman. Since I have read that book, I have again altered my opinion; as I have thereby found, that a man who takes all his facts from the relation of others, is very often miſtaken in his premiſes. The Author of the Hiſtory of the Eaſt and Weſt Indies, is undoubtedly a great genius, and of unbounded hiſtorical knowledge. He has collected his materials, and wrought them up, in a very pleaſing and maſterly manner. But if he has been as ill informed in what he relates in the other parts of his hiſtory, as he has in that which pertains to the progreſs of the Engliſh in Aſia, for the laſt twenty-five years, however harmonious his language, or however pleaſing his manner, I do from my own knowledge declare, that his hiſ-

tory,

tory, in that part, ought not to be received, or confidered in any other point of view, than that of being a moft beautiful hiftorical novel, where, with a few acknowledged facts for a foundation, the author has, by the affiftance of great learning, a fine imagination, and uncommon power over words, blended truth and falfhood together in fo bewitching a manner, as to give him a chance of misleading pofterity to the lateft period of time. On fuch foundations do your mere men of letters mount up to immortality! There is an harfhnefs and commonality in treating of plain matters of fact, or fimple truth founded on experience, particularly when they are handled by an unlettered merchant; that a work drawn up by fuch a genius as that poffeffed by the Author of the Hiftory of the Indies, will for ever have the preference with two large tribes of readers; thofe of great learning and univerfal reading, who judge of the works of an author by his diction, without regard to truth; and thofe who, from want of learning and abilities to read, or think at all, are extremely prone to believe the moft malicious reports againft their countrymen, though propagated by a declared enemy to the glory and profperity of their nation. But there is a third order of men endued with common fenfe, who read and think enough, to diftinguifh truth from fiction, however poorly attired the former, or gaudily decked out the latter. To thefe I addrefs what I have to fay, in anfwer to the

Abbé's account of the progreſs of the Engliſh Eaſt India Company's affairs in India, ſince the year 1750. So long have I been an eye witneſs to the tranſactions in Aſia: And though the Abbé hath every advantage over me, which a great genius, and a great ſcholar, can have over a plain unletter-ed man, yet I find not the leaſt diffidence or fear, in entering the liſts with him, on the ſubjects which have happened within the period above mentioned. To his ſuperior abilities, I ſhall oppoſe a relation of the facts as they really have happened, in the plain ſimple garb of truth, and leave cavilling to word catchers and feeders on ſyllables.

The Abbé's genius hurries him on with ſuch rapidity, that I own, in the multitude of well arranged words, I am at a loſs for his meaning. He tickles my fancy, but quite confounds my underſtanding. He flies about from ſtate to ſtate, and mingles an account of nations who have been, with thoſe who now are, in ſuch a laconic and dogmatical ſtile, that the ſum total of the hiſtory of many great trading nations, are ſummed up in a ſhort paragraph or two, conſiſting of a few round aſſertions, often unintelligible, and oftener void of truth.

In his account of the Maldivia Iſlands, he is right, in ſaying they produce no articles of merchandize, except cowries, coir, and fiſh; that the King

King reſides at one of the Iſlands called Mole, &c. But when he adds that he is a tyrant, and the only merchant in his dominions, he is totally miſtaken. The King of the Maldivias is a limited monarch, reigning over a great number of Iſlands. He appoints the governors to the different diviſions, which, as the Abbé ſays, are called Attalons. Each diviſion is taxed with furniſhing a certain quantity of cowries, coir, and fiſh, to pay the unavoidable expences of the government; for they have no kind of money current with them. Every family pays a ſmall part of this to the governors, after which, all the cowries they find, fiſh they catch, or coir they make, is entirely their own, and they diſpoſe of it as they pleaſe. If they export it on their own account, the King, as ſupreme magiſtrate, draws a duty of three per cent. for the purpoſes of government; and five per cent. on all the goods his own ſubjects import, for the ſame reaſon. Where doth there exiſt a mercantile ſtate, in which ſomething ſimilar is not eſtabliſhed, to defray the expences of government? In every other reſpect, the natives of the Maldivia Iſlands, are as ſecure in their perſons and properties, as any people in Europe. The judicial authority is in the hands of the Prieſts, and ſo equitably is it uſed, that there is not an inſtance of a native of theſe Iſlands, who navigate their trading veſſels to every part of India, running away, or even ſtaying behind, except left as agents at the port to which they

they trade. As they have no rice, or other grain, of their own growth, when the public magazines or granaries are not full, the King hath the preference given him to purchafe for the public good, and he pays for it with coir and cowries, which are collected as duties. So far, and no farther, is the King of the Maldivias a tyrant, and a merchant. But it would require a work as voluminous as the Abbé's own, to refute all his wrong aſſertions.

The Abbé, in his account of the trade to Mocha, aſſerts, that the French and Engliſh uſed now, a cheaper method than formerly, in procuring their coffee to be brought by private ſhips, to their ſettlements of Bombay and Pondicherry. The method is certainly a good one, and may be true as to the French; but hitherto, the Engliſh Company have continued the old mode, of ſending their own ſhips, and for no other reaſon than that which I have aſſigned in the foregoing part of this Letter, which was written before I had ſeen the Abbé's works; nor ſhall I alter it. No writer of hiſtory ever hath been more impoſed upon, than the author ſeems to have been, from the account he gives of the expulſion of the Dutch from Buſſorah, during the management of the Baron Knyphauſen. It is very poſſible, that the Abbé may have had his account from the Baron himſelf, ſince his return to Europe. It is, however, falſe in every part. I

will here give a slight, but faithful sketch, of the Baron's history, before his first arrival, and during his stay in the Dutch service in India. I know the man, and the principles on which he acted, much better than the Abbé doth; or he would never have given to the present age, and to posterity, so very erroneous an account of the reasons which caused the expulsion of the Dutch from Bussorah.

The Abbé's Baron Knyphausen, is the elder brother to the Ambassador of that name, who resided so long, in a public character from the King of Prussia, at the court of London. He was a subject of, and Lieutenant in the King of Prussia's service, and present at the action, which the army of that Prince had with the Austrians, commanded by Prince Charles of Lorrain, some time about the years 1742 or 1743. It was, I have heard, the first battle the King had ever seen. Some part of his army was broke, and very roughly handled by the Austrians. The King, who did not, it seems, command his army that day, terrified by the confusion and slaughter which surrounded him, took fright, and made a very un-soldier-like retreat; and was five leagues from the scene of action, when his General, who commanded, recalled him, with the news of his enemies having been entirely routed. This unseemly behaviour in the Prince, so roused the indignation of our young Baron, that he wrote a severe satire on his master, which coming to the knowledge

knowledge of the latter, he ſent to ſeize the Baron, and had him closely confined. The young ſoldier ſeeing the danger he was in, found means to induce the centinel, who had him in charge, to go off with him. During ſeveral days, he and his friend the centinel, paſt through many dangers, by land and by water, but at length, got into the territory of the States General. Deſpairing of a pardon, and reſtoration to his honours and eſtate, both of which the King had transferred to his younger brother, the above mentioned Ambaſſador, he took employment in the Dutch Eaſt India Company's ſervice, and was by them ſent out very ſtrongly recommended to the General of Batavia, who had ſome knowledge of the Baron's family. Here he remained ſome time, in various employments; ſaw his friend the centinel, made an Enſign; and having acquired a competent knowledge of merchandize, he was thought a proper perſon to be ſent in charge of the company's concerns at Buſſorah.—Very likely my intelligence hitherto, may have come from the ſame quarter as the Abbé's, and be equally falſe; for I had it from the Baron himſelf; not in private converſation, but in very large and public companies; where, in an oſtentatious diſplay of his own great power and abilities, he conſtantly convinced his audience, that whatever might be his character as a merchant, as a politician, he was entirely free from the ſhackles impoſed by virtue, chriſtianity, and morality.

It was a maxim with the Baron, that the Dutch and English factory flags should never fly in sight of each other. But the English were not the rivals of the Dutch at Bussorah. The former had neither sugar nor spice to vend there; the latter brought very little else. The Baron's story has been made up since his expulsion: And the Dutch at Batavia, have their ears ever open to believe any disadvantageous story of their rivals in trade. The Baron, who used truth or falshood in his narratives, as best suited his purpose, laid the blame of the treatment he received from the Turkish government, entirely to the account of the English; as much with a view of rousing the jealousy of the government at Batavia, in order thereby to obtain a force, to execute a plan he had before formed, as with intent to cover the real cause of his expulsion. The truth is this; the Baron was a man of great intrigue, and had a very high opinion of his own abilities in the service of the fair. His vanity often prompted him to boast of favours he never received. It is not easy for a European, and a Christian, in so conspicuous a station, as that in which the Baron acted at Bussorah, to negociate for himself, in affairs which lead to an intimate intercourse with Mahometan ladies. The law positively forbids such commerce, even with the meanest of the people, and a discovery is very fatal to both parties. Knyphausen's ambition led him to seek an intimacy with Duchesses and Lady Marys; and the pimps of Bussorah, like their

their brethren in all other parts of the world, promiſe Junos,, though they deal in clouds. One of thoſe honeſt men taught the Baron to believe, that the young ſpouſe of a rich old Turkiſh merchant, ſighed for his embraces. Secret paſſages, trap doors, and every other apparatus of intrigue, was prepared at the Dutch factory. Huſh money was in golden ſhowers advanced; and a trained goddeſs from the public ſtews, was conducted with great myſtery to the Baron's arms. The art of the well taught courtezan, her fine cloaths, which had been procured by the Baron's bounty, together with his ignorance in the Turkiſh and Arabian languages, enabled the pimp and drab to impoſe on him for ſome time. But nothing could ſecure him from the effects of his own abſurd vanity. He puffed of his ſucceſs ſo often, and ſo publicly, that the Cadies Officers got intelligence of the intrigue. The factory was ſurrounded, and the happy pair taken together. The Baron was confined, the Lady drummed with ignominy round the town, and the Pimp loſt his noſe and ears. I have ſeveral times ſince ſeen the miſerable mutilated wretch, imploring charity from the paſſengers in the public way.

Whether the Baron received a *bambooing* or not, I really do not remember; but I know that the Engliſh Reſident, intereſted himſelf extremely with the government, to prevent ſo diſgraceful and painful an application, to the feet of a national Reſident;

Refident. Be that as it may, it coft the Baron large fums to make the matter up, and obtain his releafe. He was, however, at length difcharged; went to Batavia; and had art enough to procure fome fhips of force, with which he returned to the Gulf of Perfia; landed on the Ifland of Carrack, and fent his fhips to block up the entrance to Buf-forah River; laid the government under contribution, as well as the foreign merchants; and for a time interrupted the trade of the port; and obtained repayment of the money which had been forced from him, with large premium.

After the death of Thomas Kouli Khan, or Nadir Shaw, the kingdom of Perfia fell into great diforder. The governors of diftant provinces fet up for themfelves, and became independent Princes. At that time, an officer named Sheik Abdulla, was in command of the ftrong fortrefs of Bundarick. It lies on the fea coaft of Perfia, and about fix leagues north-eaft from the Ifland of Carrack, which our Baron now occupied. From the death of Nadir Shaw, to the time we are now fpeaking, Abdulla had kept poffeffion of the fort, and adjacent country, more by a ftrict application to the advantages of commerce, which his favourable fituation gave him, than by the power of his arms. The port was the moft fecure in all the kingdom for fmall veffels: Nor was the road for large ones a bad one, except when the north-weft winds prevailed, and the great fhips ufually lay under the

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ſmall Iſland of Koulle, about four leagues diſtant. The road by land to Sharaſs, then the ſecond city in, and now the capital of the kingdom, was open and good. Every encouragement was given to the ſhips and veſſels of all nations, to trade to the port. The Engliſh had a factory in the town; and the Baron agreed to pay a ſmall ſum annually, as a quit rent for the Iſland he had previouſly obtained permiſſion to ſeize.

No ſooner had the Baron built a fort on the Iſland of Carrack, than he began to intrigue. Unluckily the old Sheik of Bundarick, had a young ſon of a moſt diabolical diſpoſition; as void of the feelings of humanity, as he was of filial piety and fear. With this young deſperado, the Baron kept up a friendly intercourſe. If Baron Knyphauſen did not approve of the young man's principles, his vanity frequently induced him to belie his own; for nothing was more common with him than to declare, that a man with the ſpirit, and in the ſituation of Mirmahana, who ſaw a kingdom open to his ambition, did right to ſeize it. The infamous parricide deſtroyed his father, mother, uncle, and elder brother; drove out the Engliſh, and granted an excluſive right of the trade of the port, to his friend the Baron. The Abbé is right, when he ſays the Baron's ſucceſſors poſſeſſed not his abilities. From the character drawn of Mirmahana, by his friend Knyphauſen, the following Dutch governors placed a confidence in the

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ufurper, which he did not deferve. He took an opportunity to furprize the fort, put the garrifon to the fword, and drove the Dutch entirely out of the Gulf, to which they have never traded fince. Such were the fervices rendered by the renegado Baron to his protectors the Dutch—And fo untrue is the Abbé's account of that tranfaction.

It is impoffible for a man, who knows any thing of the true hiftory of the nations inhabiting the coafts of Malabar and Coromandel, to read with patience, the Abbé's account of them. He feems to me, to have been at the trouble, to have collected all the true, and all the fabulous accounts, which have ever been given to the world, of thofe famous countries, and to have jumbled them together in fuch a manner, as to render it impoffible for the reader to draw any real information or knowledge from his work. Now and then, for a paragraph or two, he appears to be ferious; and you begin to hope that the mercurial fpirit of the Frenchman is fixed, and that he is on the point to give you a fober and rational account of fome country, people, or manufacture; but in an inftant he is gone, and you find your chain of reflection broke, by being hurried away you know not how, and reading a fhort account of fome drug or mineral, when you are thinking of a piece of cotton cloth or muflin. The horrid maffacre which he continually commits, on the names of people, places, and things,

things, I ſuppoſe his tranſlator ſhould ſhare with him.—Both, together, they have made vile work of it. In ſhort, it is one of thoſe productions, which you can neither go on to read with patience, or have reſolution to lay entirely aſide. Many of his political, philoſophical, and mercantile reflections and obſervations, are truly beautiful, and in ſome places ſublime; in others they are ſo ungenerous, illiberal, and diſingenuous, that no catch penny writer of novels hath ever gone beyond him.

His obſervation, that the Engliſh Eaſt India Company's ſervants at Bombay, would one day draw their maſters into a precarious and dangerous war with the Mahrattas, hath been verified. Hitherto it hath turned out well: And if the Company's managers at home, have ſenſe enough to force their ſervants abroad to be quiet with the acquiſition of the Iſland of Salſet, which ſecures at all times proviſion to Bombay, their mercantile empire on that ſide of India, may be ſaid to be fixed and permanent. A contrary conduct, will moſt aſſuredly ſhake their poſſeſſions all over Aſia to their foundations, if not bring ruin on the whole.*

*This Letter was written in the end of the year 1776. The writer's opinion of the Mahratta war, ſo fully expreſſed, was the ſame with that of Governor General Haſtings; though in obedience to orders from the Company at home, the Governor was obliged to act contrary to it.

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THE present flourishing state of the Company's affairs in Bengal, where, by your prudence and economy, their debts have been entirely liquidated, and their remittance to Europe, by their annual investments, increased in a sufficient degree to pay their debts there, is an answer to all the Abbe's remarks on tyranny, distress, and mismanagement. I agree with him, that a little more foresight in the country officers of government, might have warded off, in some degree, the dreadful effects of the famine; but that that tremenduous providential visitation, was in the smallest degree increased by the avarice or inhumanity of the Europeans, I deny with great certainty. If ever God made a charitable, just, or good man, the then English Governor of Bengal, John Cartier, Esq. was that man. But at the time we are now speaking of, the government was not sufficiently settled, to have regular returns made of the quantities of rice collected in the different provinces; though the causes of the famine, were plain and alarming enough; and we now are surprised that we did not advert to them. Most certain it is, the general scarcity of grain all the kingdom over, did not strike the imagination of one individual, until it was too late to apply a remedy. The Abbé is quite mistaken, in his account of the seed and harvest time in Bengal. The first crop of rice is planted in May and June, and collected in August and September. However strange it may appear to people at a distance, (the fact

faƈt is too well remembered here,) that until the demand for the ſeed grain, in the month of April, gave the alarm, not a man in the kingdom had the leaſt idea of the dreadful calamity which was on the point to fall upon us. In a few days, rice, which was ſelling at twenty, and twenty two ſeers for a rupee, at the deareſt markets in the kingdom, roſe to eight and ten ſeers. Every body that had money, went to market. The Europeans of all nations, as well as the wealthy country merchants, endeavoured to lay in a ſtock ſufficient to ſerve their ſervants and dependents. The Company did the ſame for their troops, to prevent mutiny. It could not have been otherwiſe in any government in the world. The poor immediately felt the ſevere effeƈts of a rigorous famine. How was it poſſible to prevent it? There was not grain enough left in the kingdom, to ſerve the native inhabitants two months, at one third of their uſual allowance. All that the diƈtates of charity and humanity could deviſe to be done, was done, by all orders of people, to aſſiſt and relieve the diſtreſſed. It is very poſſible that ſome corn merchants gained fortunes, by having by them a quantity of grain. Was it criminal in them to have had it by them? Is the ſurplus grain in plentiful years, to be thrown into the rivers, to prevent the merchants, who buy it at riſk, and on ſpeculation, from charging a high price for it in years of ſcarcity? What kind of doƈtrine is this? The truth of the matter is, that

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all the grain in the kingdom, was consumed by the month of July; and the rigid attachment of the Hindoos to their cast, or religion, is such, that thousands of them lay down and died in the public streets, rather than preserve life at the expence of their cast, by eating what they deem unclean food. As to their dying quietly, rather than plunder the storehouses or granaries of rice, which, as the Abbé says, they saw round them, depend on it there was no such thing. Whilst rice was to be had, they sought it, and it was served out to them with a benevolence and generosity, which did honour to the owners of all denominations. When there was no more left, they preferred death to every other means of preserving life. The sheep, goats, cows, fowls, ducks, geese, and other animals, past by them with impunity. The harmless, inoffensive, innocent Hindoos, died with hunger, in a situation in which no other people on the face of the earth, would have submitted to have gone one day without wholesome food. They bore it tamely, because they knew it was not in the power of their rulers, whom they saw weeping over their misery, with admiration at their fortitude, to relieve them.

The truth once told, where is the use of the pathetic apostrophe, put by the Abbé in the mouths of people, who have had no complaints to make? "*Meer pomp of words, and pedant dissertation.*"

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THAT the famine ought to have been foreseen, I in some degree admit: but that it was foreseen, or any unfair use made of the calamity, when it did come, by Europeans or others, I deny.

IN the years 1766 and 1767, rice was so very plenty, that in many places it was not gathered in, as it would not pay the expence of collecting. On this account, less was planted in the year 1768, than had been for many years before. Great quantities of what was planted in 1769, was washed away by the overflowing of the waters; and the extreme and universal drought in 1770, filled our cup of bitters. The scripture account of the Egyptian years of plenty and of scarcity, was literally fulfilled in Bengal. But we are not worthy of having a Prophet, or man of God, sent to warn us of our approaching ruin. It often happens, that the crop suffers from too much, or too little water, in some of the provinces; whilst in other parts, the harvests are as fine and plentiful, as the most sanguine mind can wish; and they supply one another. In no period of time known to record, or to tradition, was there so general a want of rain, as in the year 1770. In vain do men, ignorant of the nature and situation of the kingdom of Bengal, and countries adjacent, talk of relieving it by an import of grain from abroad, in time of scarcity. Had all the tonnage in India, come to Bengal full freight with grain, in the year 1770, it might have re-

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lieved the poor who crowded round the capital, but never could have been of the leaſt uſe to thoſe dying with want in the provinces. All this the Dutch and French know as well as I do. But the famine was too fair an opportunity to ſtigmatize their rivals in trade, with being the authors of it, to let ſuch a plauſible theme for defamation, ſlip by unnoticed. Even many of the Engliſh, from a diabolical lying ſpirit of envy, wrote home accounts of the cauſes of that dreadful calamity, which they muſt have known to be falſe. How then could we hope to eſcape the all-powerful eloquence of the univerſally knowing Abbé ?*

Have we not cauſe to lament the enthuſiaſtic prejudices of our countrymen againſt their fellow ſubjects in Bengal, when we find the Britiſh Senate

* So unexpected was the famine, three months before it happened, at Bengal, that the writer of this Letter, then a capital merchant in Calcutta, had, in the month of April, three ſhips, of five hundred tons each, called the Lion, the Bahar, and the Cartier, all loading with rice, at the Company's ſettlement of Ganjam, on the coaſt of Oriſſa, which could have been in Bengal River in five days after order ſhould reach them to come home, had their owner conceived the great ruin that was coming on the ſettlement. He permitted them to proceed to Madraſs and Ceylon : And what is more, ſold rice at Calcutta, belonging to himſelf and others, in that very month, at twenty-four ſeers for the rupee, the like of which was not to be had in July following, four ſeers for a rupee. In ſhort, if Engliſhmen have nothing more to anſwer for, than being, as has been ſaid, the cauſers of that dreadful calamity, they have nothing to fear in the next world on that account.

entering

entering ſo far into the belief of the unſupported charges brought againſt us, as to make a law, prohibiting our buying rice in the provinces? If the farmers have not a ready vend for their grain, as ſoon as collected, they can neither pay their rent, or plant another crop. The only exporters of grain are the Europeans, in particular the Engliſh free merchants ſettled in Calcutta. They are by this law debarred from buying their grain at the firſt hand, and of courſe the quantity exported becomes every year leſs. How contrary is this to the conduct of the ſame Legiſlature in their own country! where they wiſely give bounties on the exportation of grain, and thereby ſecure a good ſtock in the nation, when ever they pleaſe to lay an embargo. But as I ſhall, in ſome one of theſe Letters, prove, beyond the power of controverſy, the abſurdity of reſtricting the Engliſh ſettlers in Bengal, from trading in any article the country produces, under proper regulations, I ſhall ſay no more of it in this place, but conclude this Letter with putting you in mind, that ſince the publication of the Abbé's work, it is become indiſpenſibly your duty, to omit no opportunity to collect materials for leaving to your country, and to poſterity, an honeſt, candid, diſpaſſionate, and fair Hiſtory of Bengal. You were in the ſervice before the capture of Calcutta by the Moors. You have ſince been employed in every ſtation, from a Reſident at the Durbar, to that of Governor General. There is nothing neceſſary

ceſſary that you do not know. Your imagination and genius is every way equal to the Abbé's; and you have an advantage which he could not boaſt, a perſonal knowledge of every tranſaction on which it will be neceſſary for you to treat. I affirm, that you have the knowledge, the abilities, and the honeſty, to reſcue the actions of your countrymen, from vile alluſion, and falſe aſperſion. If you do not do it, may God forgive you. For my part, I ſhall be very ſorry for your indolence, and want of public ſpirit, if you leave the preſent, and future generations, in the dark, as to the true hiſtory of the tranſactions of the Engliſh in Bengal, from the year 1750, to the 19th day of October, 1774. From that period to the end of your government, terminate when or how it may, the defence of your own honour, calls upon you for another kind of work. And ſorry I am to ſay, that ſuch abilities as yours, muſt be employed to refute the illiberal and unjuſt charges, brought againſt you by a moſt ignorant, ſelfiſh, uncandid, miniſterial tool, whoſe natural and acquired talents, had he been left to ſhift in the world for himſelf, could not have lifted him above the rank of a corporal in the guards.— Oh, my country! How will thy honours fade, when an Haſtings ſhall be ſuperſeded, or ſucceeded, by a Clavering, a man the moſt improper in the world, to be entruſted with ſo important a charge! Thoſe who wiſh to ſee his character drawn very fully, and very juſtly, have only to look into the

Abbé's

Abbé's works, for the account he gives of the French partizan General Lally, and add to it a moſt greedy and ſelfiſh love of money, and Clavering ſtands confeſſed.

WHAT the Abbé ſays of the oppreſſions and tyranny, exerciſed by the Engliſh over the French commerce, on the coaſts of Malabar and Coromandel, and in Bengal, ſhould be conſidered as the peeviſh complaining of a loſing gameſter. No nation on the face of the earth, would, in a ſimilar ſituation, have dealt ſo equitably, and with ſuch moderation, as the Engliſh have done, and continue to do, with reſpect to the French and Dutch traders in India. I moſt ſincerely agree with the Author of the Hiſtory of the Indies, that *his* countrymen will take the firſt opportunity of joining the ambitious and diſcontented Princes, to renew the confuſion in Aſia; and on that account, I wiſh to appriſe *my* countrymen, that it will be much eaſier to cruſh the viper in the ſhell, than to prevent the effects of his venom, when come to full growth. A ſtout ſquadron of ſhips, built in India, of teke wood, which is by nature calculated to reſiſt for ages, the alternate ſcorching heats, and vapourous humidity of the climate, will anſwer the purpoſe of continuing the power in our hands, much better than by having ſquadrons ſent from Europe. That this may be effected with great eaſe, and at little expence of men or money to the nation, or to

the Company, I pledge myſelf to make appear. But this Letter is growing long. I therefore muſt, for the preſent, take my leave of the Abbé, with many thanks for the pleaſure I have had in the peruſal of his works. If all his knowledge, and all his philoſophy, was inſufficient to gloſs over his national ſpleen to my countrymen, he will, I hope, excuſe my blunt John Bull like manners, when I affirm, that he has in his hiſtory, ſaid many things of the Engliſh nation, which are notoriouſly untrue; and further, that there are many of his aſſertions, which, as a ſcholar, a philoſopher, and a Chriſtian, he doth not believe himſelf; but that we owe them entirely to that one ſingle circumſtance, of the Abbé's having being born a Frenchman.

LETTER V.

LETTER V.

FROM A

FREE MERCHANT in BENGAL,

TO

WARREN HASTINGS, *Esq.*

HONOURABLE SIR;

IN my First Letter, I pointed out the causes of the decline of the export trade of this kingdom. The effects of those causes are now severely felt: for the Sienda, Surat, and Bombay markets, which formerly were supplied with great quantities of raw silk and sugar from Bengal, have their whole supply of the former article from China, as well as several thousand piculs of the latter, which, with the sugar carried by the Dutch Company's ships to Surat, and English private ships from Batavia to Bombay, hath almost annihilated the sugar trade of Bengal. These evils have taken deep root; for it is now

more to the intereſt of the Company's ſervants at Bombay, to ſend a ſhip loaded with cotton, ſandal-wood, and pepper, to China, and load her home with ſugar and raw ſilk, than it is to ſend her to Bengal; and whilſt this continues to be the caſe, I fear the public ſpirit of the Company's ſervants, will not operate ſufficiently ſtrong, to induce them to prefer their maſters, or even the national inter-eſt, to their own. Until within theſe ten years, very few private ſhips went from the Engliſh ſettle-ments in India, to China; and thoſe never brought back raw ſilk, or powder ſugar; for the ſhips from Bengal could ſupply the market cheaper. How unluckyly are matters reverſed! Nothing is now more common, than for twelve or fifteen Engliſh private country ſhips to be ſeen in one ſeaſon at China, loaded with cotton, pepper, ſandal-wood, &c. from the Malabar! If bills are to be had at Canton, on any of the European companies, great part of the proceeds of their cargoes, are remitted on account of private perſons: the remainder is in-veſted in raw ſilk, ſugar, tea, china ware, &c. and carried back, to the total ruin of the Bengal trade in the two former articles.

It is to be lamented, that the laudable, and even neceſſary indulgence, granted by the Company to their ſervants and others, for trading from one part of the Eaſt Indies to another, ſhould operate in ſuch a manner, as to cauſe thoſe very ſervants to

become

become the rivals of their maſters. It is the Company's, nay it is the national intereſt, that their ſettlements on the coaſt of Malabar, ſhould, as formerly, be ſupplied from Bengal, with raw ſilk and ſoft ſugar. But this never will be the caſe, whilſt thoſe articles are to be had ſo much cheaper at China than at Bengal. Monopolies and prohibitions, are deſtructive things; for beſides that they check the mercantile ſpirit in your own national adventurers, they alſo give a ſpring to the ſame ſpirit in your neighbours and rivals. If the Engliſh private gentlemen are forbid this trade under their own colours, they will purſue it under thoſe of other nations. The French, the Portugueze, and the Moors, will ſupply tonnage to carry on the trade; and the remedy will, in that caſe, be full as bad, if not worſe, than the diſeaſe. It will be taking the bread from your own ſubjects, and caſting it to ſtrangers. Accident, which firſt gave theſe provinces to the Company, hath alſo operated in giving this trade a wrong bias. An eagerneſs to forward private property from Bengal to Europe, by way of China, firſt gave cauſe for the China ſilk and ſugar, to rival the Bengal, at the markets of Sienda, Surat, and Bombay. The remittance ſchemers at Bengal, raiſed the price of all the articles of export, in the manner ſet forth in the Firſt Letter. At Bombay, the ſilk and ſugar of Bengal, would not produce their firſt coſt. But the ſchemers were obliged to go on. They load their ſhips with

cotton

cotton for China, and there finding no remittance to be had, and raw ſilk and ſoft ſugar, cheaper than at Bengal, (the ſhip cannot lie ſtill,) they load back from China to Bombay, with the very articles with which they ſet out from Bengal; and by this means, in a few years, China robbed Bengal of this whole trade. I have pledged myſelf to prove my aſſertions as I go on; but if I was in this place, to introduce the invoices of the ſhip from Bengal, with ſilk and ſugar, and the account ſales at Bombay, and the invoices of the ſame articles from China, and account ſales on the coaſt of Malabar, it would break the chain of argument, and confuſe the whole. Such who doubt my facts, I refer to my book of invoices and account ſales, which will follow theſe letters very ſhortly.

BAD as our ſituation is, the remedy is in our own hands. If the ſum of 400,000*l.* annually, which, in my Firſt Letter, I propoſed to take up at Bengal, for bills on the Company in Europe, is not ſufficient to check the wild ſpirit of remittance in the private caſh holders, let it be increaſed to 600,000*l.* which will put a total ſtop to ſo pernicious a project. Keep the caſh in the country, and enable the Company to ſend ſilk to Bombay, in ſufficient quantities to underſell the China ſilk, and furniſh money at Bombay for the uſe of that preſidency, without draining Bengal of its ſpecie, as it has done for many years paſt.

THE

The Company's taking the ſurplus private money at Bengal, for bills on themſelves in Europe, will anſwer the following good purpoſes. It will keep the current ſpecie in the kingdom; encourage the ſilk manufacture, which may be increaſed to any quantity you pleaſe: It will ſupply the preſidency of Bombay with money, and deſtroy their pernicious trade of importing raw ſilk from China, to the ports on the Malabar coaſt, to the ruin of the ſilk trade in our own provinces; and furniſh at Bombay, a capital, with which I propoſe to connect and extend the Company's European and Aſiatic commerce on that ſide of India:

The Company ſend from Bengal to Europe, as much raw ſilk this year, 1777, as will produce about 700,000*l.* ſterling.* I do not propoſe to increaſe it to more than a million, when I come to treat of, the Bengal exports to Europe; and I mention it in this place, only to obviate an objection,

*This Letter was written at Bengal in the year 1777. Since the Author has been in England, he has heard much talk about the loſs of the Levant Trade. That we do not ſend ſo much woollen cloth to Italy, and to Turkey, as formerly, may be true; and the reaſon is plain. Heretofore, the Eaſt India Company imported, *communibus annis*, about 120,000l. worth of raw ſilk from the Eaſt Indies; lately, they have imported ſix times the quantity annually. Does not that account for great part of our (ſuppoſed to be loſt) Levant Trade, and in a very comfortable way? But croakers never penetrate deeper than the ſurface. You do not want ſo much raw ſilk from Turkey and Italy as formerly, and therefore do not import it.

which

which I foresee will be made to that part of my plan, which leads to an increase of the export of that article to Bombay; because it will be said, the sending of raw silk to Bombay, will interfere with the Company's Europe investment. So much is the truth on my side the question, that I affirm, on the contrary, that the more silk the Company demand, the easier will it be to have it made. Mulberry shrubs to feed, worms to spin, and men to manufacture silk, will never be wanting in this country, whilst your judicious plan of increasing the investment annually, is pursued. Whilst the government are uniformly steady in their advances, and encouragement, as now, is given to the improvers of the silk manufacture, no quantity which you can pay for, will be wanting. Our evils arises from a different conduct. Hoarding money up in the treasury, sending specie out of the kingdom, shutting the channel of remittance by the Company's cash, and curtailing the investment, have been the rocks we have split on. Whilst you receive the tribute in the manufactured goods of the kingdom, you at once enrich it and your native country; but whilst you starve the manufacture to send cash abroad, or lock it up, you destroy the fowl for the golden egg. In the course of the last twenty months, Bombay has been supplied by Bengal, with thirty-six lacks of rupees, in money or by bills, at a most enormous and pernicious discount. Will any man deny, that it would have been more for the

the intereſt of this country, that the Company had ſent to Bombay, fifty lacks of rupees in the manufactures of theſe provinces, though it ſhould have produced no more than the amount ſent in caſh? Not if he underſtands the nature of the trade of this kingdom.

WHAT ever it may coſt, I maintain it, that the Company ſhould provide annually, to the amount of fifty lacks of rupees in goods, proper for the Gulfs of Mocha, Perſia, Bombay, and Surat, the proceeds of which ſhould center in Bombay. Among the invoices will be to be found, the goods properly arranged, which are fit for this purpoſe. Here I need only mention the names of the ſeveral articles; fine and coarſe cotton cloths; raw ſilk, and ſilk piece goods; ſugar, and ſalt petre; all of which this country is capable of producing the moſt unlimited quantities. The ſtandard of goodneſs muſt never be forgotten; the advances muſt be made in due time; people ſecured from oppreſſion; and all chowky duties aboliſhed. With ſuch regulations, the moſt ſanguine imagination is hardly capable of conceiving, to what a degree of opulence this populous and fertile country may be raiſed.

FROM the fifty lacks of rupees worth of goods ſent annually round from Bengal, the proceeds of which ſhould center in Bombay, beſides the good

effects

effects mentioned above, others of no lefs importance will arife. Such a conftant and regular fupply of the manufactured goods of Bengal, proper for the markets on that fide of India, will relieve the Company's fervants at Bombay, from the neceffity of drawing continually on the government of Bengal, at fuch amazing difcount as is now done; and furnifh them with money, not only to fupply the deficiency in their current expences, but to affift in preparing goods for the Europe and China market; and by that means, fend ftock to enable the Company to anfwer the bills which muft inevitably, for fome years, be drawn on them from Bengal, to turn the current of private remittance into our own channel.

It very often happens, that the prefidency at Bombay have not ftock fufficient, or even credit, to raife money to compleat the inveftment indented for by the Company. The confequence of this is, that one, and fometimes two of their fhips, which the Company expect will return with pepper, Surat and Cambaya piece goods, &c. are obliged to be fent round to the other prefidencies in queft of cargoes.—Who doth not fee that fuch injudicious management would ruin individuals? The Company, from its credit and permanency, is enabled to ftand the fhock.—But how are the Directors to be defended? Why truly by their indolence or ignorance; for they never hitherto, have thought of

connecting,

connecting, or combining, the trade in India with the trade in Europe, in ſuch a manner, as that they ſhould mutually ſupport each other, they know that. If no cargo is ready at one preſidency, the managers there will ſend the ſhip to another, and that gives the opportunity of ſerving a favourite Captain: otherwiſe what is meant by their continual recommendation, of ſending ſuch or ſuch a ſhip a country voyage, when they muſt, or ought to know, they have properly ſpeaking, no country trade carried on for the Company, from port to port in India?

WITH the cargoes of the ſhips outward bound to Bombay, with the proceeds of the Company's revenue on the Iſland, the cuſtom-houſe collections, and the ſupply from Bengal, a great fund will be eſtabliſhed at that preſidency, to carry on the mercantile concerns of the Company. I ſay their mercantile concerns, becauſe I would wiſh to have them ſuppreſs the military ſpirit for conqueſt and dominion, and come back to their firſt mercantile principles. How foreign is it to the ſpirit which the conſtitution ſhould naturally inſpire, to ſee their ſervants at Bombay, at one and the ſame time, enlarging their military eſtabliſhment, and reducing that of the marine! If they are not poſitively tied down, never to extend their conqueſts beyond the Iſland of Salſet, in vain will you eſtabliſh a fund for trade. Bring the younger ſervants back to their

offices, and oblige them to ſtudy the intereſts of their employers, on the conſtitutional principles of the Company's charter, in the whole of which, the words conqueſt and dominion are not to be found, or no national good can ariſe from your poſſeſſions on that ſide India. If the Proprietors of India Stock, will be at the pains to examine the annual military, civil, and marine expences, at Bombay, and add to thoſe the freight paid for ſhips, taken up for that part of the ſervice, and the ſum total of the invoices of goods ſent out from Europe on thoſe ſhips, and then obſerve, that all the returns which are made to defray ſuch enormous expences, is a cargo or two of pepper, one of piece goods, and every ſecond year a cargo of coffee, they would ſoon be convinced, that were their dividends to ariſe out of ſuch pitiful returns, how ſoon they would ſink to nothing. It is the rich mine in Bengal, which has hitherto ſupported ſuch unjuſtifiable, injudicious, and accumulated expences: But that is not inexhauſtible. If a war with France breaks out, from whence are the funds to ariſe to ſupport ſuch conſuming eſtabliſhments? The anſwer is eaſy enough; the military men ſhall give it.—Let us go, ſay they, into the Mahratta country, and we will conquer for you provinces in abundance, the territorial revenue of which ſhall anſwer all your demands.—I am quite ſick of hearing ſuch doctrine. We have conquered more than once, until we have been on the brink of ruin. For God's ſake let us

draw

draw ſome benefit from dear bought experience, and not, by graſping at what can never be of the leaſt uſe to us as a mercantile people, loſe the advantages we may, and ought to draw, from our preſent ſituation as ſuch.*

The Company have, at no period of time, had ſtock in hand ſufficient at Bombay, to furniſh one years inveſtment in advance, which has been a great diſadvantage to their affairs; for by not knowing what goods were, or could, with the annual ſtock in hand, be provided, they took their annual ſhips up at a venture, rather than on a fixed plan. If one entire cargo of the uſual ſorts of piece goods, half a one of coffee, and three entire cargoes of pepper, were always ready in their warehouſes at Bombay, and on the Malabar coaſt, excluſive of what was indented for the ſervice of the current year, they could at all times command goods for the markets in Europe, and be ſure of the return of the ſhips in regular rotation, and not have them at a moſt ruinous expence of demurrage, running about India to ſeek for cargoes. This appears to me to be the firſt ſtep which ought to be taken on

* It is not vanity which induces the Author to note that theſe Letters were written in 1776 and 1777; it is the deſire he has of doing juſtice to the man to whom they are addreſſed. Mr. Haſtings dreaded, and would, if he could, have prevented the pernicious Mahratta war, which has ſince produced the diſtreſſes the Author foretold.

the

the coaſt of Malabar; and that the government there ſhould, in the month of January every year, tranſmit to Bengal, a conciſe ſtatement of their ſtock of caſh, and ſaleable goods on hand, what would be their probable expences for the current year, and a liſt of ſuch Bengal goods, as would be moſt proper to ſend them to make good the deficiency. This liſt would be at Bengal in time to go home with the April packet, and the Governor General and Councils anſwer to it; by which the Company would know what dependence they could place on the government of Bengal, for their neceſſary annual returns from Bombay. As things are managed at preſent, they are at no kind of certainty whatever; and this is one of the cauſes why they ſometimes ſend out five ſhips to the Malabar coaſt, and have but three, two, and ſometimes one, return loaded from that ſide of India. The others are ſent about from preſidency to preſidency, at an enormous expence to the Company, in queſt of a returning cargo, and carrying goods for the benefit of the Captain only.

With ſuch a ſtock in hand as is mentioned above, the Directors would act with ſome degree of certainty. If the Europe markets required an additional quantity of piece goods, coffee, pepper, &c. the Company would have but to order it, and it would come home on the returning ſhips.

That

THAT all the Company's merchant ſhips outward bound, ought to be clear of the Channel by the firſt of April, to inſure them a tolerable paſſage to India, is well known to many in the direction. Why they are detained later, no good reaſon can be given. The old plea of keeping a ſhip or two, until the election was over, to let their friends abroad know who was to govern for the year, is now over. The ſtate have reduced the annual ſupply of new Directors, to the ſmall number of ſix. Now if the whole of the Eaſt India Proprietors of Stock, are ſo well broken in and bitted, as to admit of the Miniſter ſending a card with the names of ſix ſervile dependents of his own, to fill up the annual vacancies, I own I know not what to ſay. But if, as I hope, there is yet left virtue ſufficient among the independent Proprietors of Stock, to judge for themſelves, I do not imagine that the nation in general is ſo depraved, but that ſix men may be annually found, who poſſeſs the neceſſary qualifications of honour, integrity, knowledge, and abilities, to conduct this great branch of the national commerce, on the true mercantile principles: men who, from being inſpired with true patriotiſm, will have the national honour, and Company's intereſt, ever in view; who will ſuffer no paltry inclination to ſerve individuals, to be an inducement to ſacrifice their public truſt. London ſurely is not yet become ſuch a ſink of iniquity, ſuch a Sodom and Gomorrah, but that ſix rich merchants

merchants are to be found, in whofe hands this branch of the national mercantile honour, may be placed with fafety.

PLACE me twenty-four fuch men as defcribed above, in the direction, the fecond Wednefday in April, and by the firft of July, they will have ready, to fend from London by the July packet, a lift of the fhips they propofe to fend to each of their fettlements in India the coming feafon, with an account of what goods they will carry out, and what returns they expect by them. Thefe papers will be circulated to all their principal, as well as fubordinate fettlements, as foon as they arrive, and each factory will know what goods they are to have to fell, and what returns they are expected to prepare. They will make their ability, or inability, known to the prefidency on which they are dependent, and affiftance will be given in time, to enable them to comply with the Company's orders.

WILL it not furprife any man to know, that the Company carry on their mercantile correfpondence with their four prefidencies, in as fecret and myfterious a manner, as if they were enemies to one another; and by fuch ridiculous conduct, have, in many inftances, made them fo. The prefidency at Bengal, know no more what orders, or what goods, are fent from Europe to Bombay, than if they were a colony of Ruffians. No ftatements are ever fent from

from presidency to presidency, as they are not amenable but to the Company. They correspond on the terms of independent states. The government of Bombay and Bencoolen, draw bills on Bengal, because they want money, but assign no reason for their drawing; and this facility of obtaining cash, has been the cause of a great profusion of expence at the former of those presidencies. The managers at home, not feeling the inconveniency of furnishing the money, examine so little into it, that I fancy it would be difficult to find, in all the Company's correspondence with Bombay, one single paragraph, tending to check such a wanton waste of property. It is now grown into such a habit, that the Bombay gentlemen will not have the least patience to wait the supplies, but have, within the course of twelve months, sent down three different vessels to Bengal for money; and our simpletons here have opened their veins, and let them suck their hearts blood; for the sending the current specie of a mercantile country away, which hath no present hopes of a speedy supply, is literally such. If it can be proved, and I shrewdly suspect that it may, that for five years past, the presidency of Bombay, have had from Bengal, more money, in cash and bills, than the whole amount of the invoices of the goods they have transmitted, within the same period of time, to the Company in Europe, tell me, ye wise men, how long this will last? Can such enormous profusion be supported?

And what will be your ſituation, in caſe of a war with France?

So little connected, and ſo unameanable, are theſe injudicious ſervants of an ill managed Company, to one another, that it is notoriouſly known, that the gentlemen at Bombay, have ſupplied the freebooter Hyder Ally, with arms and amunition on the coaſt of Malabar, when he was preparing to, and actually on his march, to attack the Carnatic. Can any human policy be more ridiculous, than that the Bombay preſidency, ſhould write to the Company in the moſt preſſing manner, for leave to take advantage of the confuſions in the Mahratta government, by joining one party, in order to extort ſome conceſſions from them; whilſt the preſidency at Bengal, at a great expence, was ſending over land to the Mahratta court, at Delhi, a Lieutenant-Colonel as an Ambaſſador, to make a peace with them. At Madraſs, the ſenior civil ſervants, inſpired by the military, confine their Governor, and uſurp the government. The Governor General and Council of Bengal, approve the meaſure, and promiſe to ſupport the new adminiſtration. The Governor and Council at Bombay, declare they will not know them, but addreſs to Lord Pigot. Is not this, in the ſcripture language, a houſe divided againſt itſelf? Tell me, ye military merchants, how long will it ſtand?

The ruin which I plainly foresee, the military spirit will bring on this beneficial branch of the trade of my country, is continually staring me in the face, and carrying me away from my argument. It is grown to such a height, that it almost requires a providential interposition to save us. Surely the independent Proprietors will step in, and examine minutely the conduct of the Directors, and not permit a venal and ignorant majority, longer to squander away their property, and the national honour. Let the man, or, if it were more, the men, who, by their interest and influence, sent out Sir Robert Fletcher twice, to the command of the army on the coast, after he had been broke by a court martial, for fomenting the discontent of the army, at the resignation in Bengal, and repeatedly gave him the opportunity to disturb the government of Mr. Dupree, and to imprison Lord Pigot; let them, I say, reflect on the consequences of supporting such military firebrands, in opposition to the real mercantile interest of the East India Company, whose commercial prosperity is become so necessary to the honour and natural interest of their country.—But to return ———

My twenty-four Directors having determined on the number of ships which will be necessary to carry out the million and a half of goods of the mother country, and bring home the cargoes from Asia, which I have engaged shall produce three times

that ſum in Europe, they will not be at a loſs how to diſpoſe of them. They will go loaded out, and come loaded home, for the Company, and not for the maſters. No canvaſſing for particular voyages, will diſturb their councils. They will be men of honour, pleaſed and happy, with the credit of being truſted with the care of public property. But as they are but men, and liable to the weakneſs and foibles of men, they will, by good regulations, calculated for the intereſt of the Company, and diſpatch of buſineſs, put it out even of their own power, to act improperly. The ſhips to be firſt taken up, are known from the date of their arrival at the Iſland of St. Helena, homeward bound the laſt voyage. The number wanted for all the preſidencies once fixed, let ſo many tickets, with the name of the preſidency on them, as anſwer the number of the ſhips, be put into an urn, and the names of the freighted ſhips in another, and let the drawing determine the voyage. The four or five tickets with the name of Bombay on them, ſhould determine that to be the voyage of the ſhips, the names of which were drawn at the ſame time; and ſo of the reſt. It might not be thought an improper place, to introduce here, my plan for regulating the private trade, to be allowed to the Captain and Officers of each ſhip; but as it will branch out into ſo many diviſions and ſubdiviſions, and will include indulgences to all orders of the Company's ſervants abroad, it will require a Letter of itſelf,

if I find time, and have courage to attempt it. I muſt own I begin to be a little afraid of touching on it at all; as to give the real reaſons for aboliſhing the preſent mode of conducting the private trade, and ſubſtituting another in its room, will lead me into ſuch a detail of the artful, low, un-gentleman-like evaſions, practiſed in the ſervice, as would make it dangerous for me to engage in. Such tampering with tradeſmen, to ſet their names to falſe bills of parcels; ſuch bribing the Company's officers on the ſhips going out, and the King's and Company's officers, on their coming home; ſuch ſmuggling, falſe ſwearing, paltry cunning, and contemptible lying, as would moſt likely deter many honeſt parents, from breeding their children up in a ſervice, where the infamous practices they are witneſs to, the very firſt voyage, root out for ever from their young minds, every idea of virtue and morality. If I do attempt to ſketch a plan for conducting the private trade in the ſervice, I moſt aſſuredly will do it with the ſame freedom as I treat of the public commerce; and I wiſh the preſent Captains, and preſent Officers, not to ſuppoſe themſelves the men intended, when I deſcribe a practice, which, in its operations, is deſtructive to our national character, for mercantile probity, and common honeſty. I will mention no names of ſwearing Captains, or forſwearing Officers; perjured, or forging Purſers. Let them not lay to my charge, the internal twitchings of that never dying monitor, their

their own conſcience; that when I ſay a thing is frequently done, gives hints that I mean them, becauſe they did it. Let them ceaſe to be perjured knaves, and the ſatire falls to the ground. After all, as I believe the fault to be originally in the managers, who, from falſe notions of economy, and glove-like conſciences, make roguery neceſſary to a ſubſiſtence in the ſervice, if, in my inveſtigation, I chance to probe the evil to the bottom, and in ſo doing, give pain to the diſeaſed, I do at the ſame time promiſe them, a mild, equitable, and eaſy remedy.

Bombay is moſt certainly the place beſt calculated in all India, at which to form a naval power. The magazines of naval ſtores, both for the King and Company's uſe, muſt be laid up there. The noble docks it now has, and more, which in time it may have, makes it a place of the utmoſt importance to the Company, and to the nation. I want to make it the great emporium of trade for the weſtern ſide of India—Not a mere Gibraltar; a barrack for troops, or magazine for military ſtores: The harbour is ſafe and capacious. Your fleet will give protection to the merchants who may frequent it from Perſia, Arabia, Abyſſinia, the Red Sea, and Africa; as well as from the coaſt of Gandell, Sienda, Guzurat, Cambaya, and the whole of the Mahratta dominions on the Malabar. I will not ſay that it ſhould at once be made a free port, becauſe

caufe at prefent we are poor; but I moft fincerely wifh it may foon become fo; and in the interim, would have no kind of duties levied on the goods, fent from Bengal for fale on that fide of India. It would aftonifh any man, to know what a concourfe of veffels would flock from all the above mentioned dominions to Bombay, when they were once affured of your paffes of protection, (for what power would dare to infult your flag?) and come with a certainty of finding the Bengal goods, proper for their different countries, wrought up to their primitive goodnefs, and on reafonable terms. Every thing you want for the Company in Europe, or at China, would be brought home to your own doors; and golden fhowers of money to make good the balance, which would be for ever in your favour. No people who have ever yet traded by fea to India, have had it fo much in their power to make permanent a mercantile empire, as the Englifh, fince their acquifition of Bengal. Great as our miftakes have been, we have yet time to look back to firft principles. You, Sir, are fetting the example in Bengal. May the influence of your conduct extend to the Malabar, and fave us from that prelude to a general ruin of our Afiatic commerce, a continental war with the Mahrattas.

It feems that the Court of Directors, by taking up four or five fhips annually for Bombay, when at moft they can have cargoes ready but for three, including

including the coffee ſhip, would perſuade the public, that it is neceſſary to be at the expence of one or two additional ſhips, to carry out men and ſtores for their army and marine at that preſidency. If this really be the caſe, why not take an advantage for the Company, which is conſtantly ſolicited, and has been very often granted to, individuals? A ſhip which has run out her four voyages in the Company's ſervice, is not ſo decayed as to be unfit to go a fifth. The reaſon which prevents her being taken up a fifth time, is, that the freight the Company pay is ſo ample, that they can always have new ſhips at the ſame rate as an old one, and on that account, it is a good rule that a ſhip ſhall make but four voyages in their ſervice. But it is by no means an economical one, that ſhe ſhall be always ten, often twelve, and ſometimes fifteen years, in executing what may be performed ſometimes in ſeven, and always in eight years. But rigid economy is by no means the characteriſtic of the managers for the Eaſt India Company. They enter into the direction with a declared intention to ſerve their private friends, and in general keep ſo cloſe to that their avowed principle of action, that they very ſeldom think of the Company.

The very beſt of the ſhips which have ſerved out their time, is to be bought for 1500*l.* For 6000*l.* more they may be fitted out and victualled for the run to Bombay, ſo as to ſubſiſt during the voyage,

hundred recruits for their army, and one hundred ſeamen for the marine; and the ſhip, on her arrival in India, will ſell, with her ſtores, for her firſt coſt and outfit, that is 7500*l.* and the Company would have tranſported to their ſettlements, at no kind of expence, three hundred tons of ſtores, and two hundred recruits for her army and marine. Compare this with their practice of a Bombay and and China, and a Bombay and Bengal ſhip, where every ſacrifice is made to favour the commander, to the ruin of the Company, and ſcandal of their Directors.

THE fact as above related, is ſo notoriouſly true, that I run a greater riſk of being laughed at for publiſhing what every body knows, than to have the matter controverted. Is it not then very extraordinary, that ſo plain, equitable, and eaſy a method, is not purſued, when it would moſt aſſuredly ſave to the Company, 25,000*l.* every year? But it would leave two ſhips untaken up, and prevent two favourite Captains from making their fortunes. I have known one of thoſe important men (I mean a Captain of one of the Company's ſhips) ſent from Bombay with ſix hundred bales of cotton to Bengal, in the month of September, with orders to return to Bombay in the following March, act ſo lubberly in the paſſage, as not to arrive in Bengal River till the end of February, and whilſt there, entering a proteſt againſt the Governor and Council, for not

diſpatching

difpatching of him in time to return from Bombay to Europe the fame feafon; though this was, from his late arrival, become utterly impoffible: yet the proteft ferved the purpofe of throwing the whole weight of the expence on the Company, and faved the owners on her return to Europe. This is one inftance, felected from many hundreds, where a fhip has been fent out of her way, at an improper feafon of the year, for no other reafon in the world, but to ferve the Captain. The freight of the fix hundred bales of cotton down to the Bay, and of three thoufand bags of falt petre back, comes to 2625*l.* the demurrage of the fhip for one whole year, at twenty pounds per diem, comes to 7300*l.* to this muft be added the difappointment and expence the Company were unneceffarily put to, if goods were ready with which to have fent the fhip home from Bombay in March, or the folly (to fay no worfe) of taking the fhip up at all, if there was no returning cargo ready for her. I know the Directors, the Owners, and the Commanders, have been fo blended and knit together, that I have not the leaft doubt, but that fome half ftarved, fhoelefs, threadbare, garretteer grammarian, will be employed to deny the facts, abufe the author, and criticife on the language of thefe truth fpeaking papers, and his pay will be carried to the head of fecret fervice charges. If the Proprietors will be fo duped, as not to examine into the merits of their own caufe, let them fleep on. I have a national purpofe in

view

view in writing these Letters. The proper management of the trade to Asia, is of the highest importance to the prosperity of Great Britain. It must be conducted by an intermediate body between the state and individuals, constituted something like the present Company. But their managers should be public spirited, and honest men; and in order to their being so, I take now and then an opportunity to observe, that it is well known, that their predecessors were consummate rogues, and by their ill management, brought dishonour on their country.

During the late war, great complaints were made in England, of the want of large timber for the use of the royal navy. It has since gone so far, as to raise a jealousy of the East India Company, for building such large ships for their service, as are the Besborough, Morse, Grafton, &c. To go about to assign the real reason, which gave cause to the owners to build such unweildy ships, to serve as mere merchant-men, would lead me again into that kind of investigation, which I have but this moment quitted; and which, however necessary to be used now and then *in terrorem*, doth by no means lead to the point I have in view, which is a better management in future, not retrospection into what is past; nor shall I use it but in support of my assertions, that the East India Company's managers at home, have made a perpetual sacrifice of their

interest

intereſt for the advantage of individuals, and connived at a military ſpirit in their ſervants abroad, which leads to the utter ruin of the national trade to Aſia.

Had the ſhips above mentioned, and others of the ſame dimenſions, been pierced to carry fifty guns, as the French have ever done their Eaſt India ſhips, then indeed they might have been armed in time of war, in ſuch a manner, as to have ſerved as convoy to the other ſhips of the Company, or occaſionally been brought into the line; but to build them half as large again as the Company's other ſhips, and charter them for the ſame tonnage, was a ſcandalous waſte of the national ſtock of timber; and for reaſons ſo iniquitous, that I ſhall not mention them.

It is in time of peace, that all wiſe nations prepare for war. There is not a doubt, but that our poſſeſſions in Aſia muſt be protected by our naval power. It is clear that government think ſo. For on the leaſt alarm of the French ſending a force to the Iſles of France, a ſquadron is immediately diſpatched by the court of London, to the coaſt of Malabar or Coromandel. This, whether the alarm be true or falſe, is unavoidably attended with a great expence of ſhips, men, and money. The nation can bear the latter much better than the two former; and this reflection leads me back to the

conſideration

consideration of the first link of my great combining chain, which I propose to extend round every branch of the national trade to the East Indies, and by so doing, point out the way to give life, spirit, strength, and permanency to the whole, and thereby render it invulnerable to the busy, active, artful, and designing views of our jealous rivals, and natural enemies, the French.

The Company send five ships annually to Bombay. Their servants there, for want of money, find it difficult to return them three. To remove this difficulty, I am for taking money at Bengal, with which to provide proper goods to be sent to Bombay, and give bills on the Company for what the Bengal presidency cannot spare.—But how, say the Directors, are we to have it sent us home? We want no more pepper, coffee, Surat, Cambaya, or other piece goods, from that side of India.—If that is really the case, Gentlemen, are you not ashamed to keep up, at such an astonishing expence, fleets, armies, and factories, on that side the peninsula, to furnish three ships cargoes only? You have done with conquests; for if that is permitted you one inch further than what you now possess, reasons, such as you and your military servants can produce, will not be wanting to carry the British flag to Delhi, to Agra, to Ava, to Tartary, and Peking in China. You must be tied down to Salset; the fallacious ideas of accumulating territorial

revenue

revenue put our of your heads, or you out of your posts; and your agents abroad be set down to sorting of cloth, and sifting the dust out of pepper. When you are thus brought back to your reason, and to the occupation long and successfully practised by your predecessors of old time, on the principles of the charter, you will not want vend for double the quantity annually; nor we, here, the means of sending it to you. But you are not the people with whom I wish to argue. I address the great mercantile Governor Hastings, and appeal to the common sense of the nation. It is your maladministration, your ignorance, your selfishness, and other iniquity, that continually occurs, and lead me out of my argument into these wild digressions.

If more Malabar pepper than what you now send home, cannot be vended in Europe to good advantage, (which I am so stubborn as not to believe,) you never can overstock the markets at China; and as your trade to China is a trade of necessity, and must be carried on, I wish to have it done at as little expence of money to the nation as possible. I shall therefore, in all my arguments, consider our trade with China rather as a channel, by which the neat proceeds of the national estate in Asia, may be remitted to the least disadvantage, than as a traffic of choice. If you order home a greater quantity of pepper, and other goods, from the

the Malabar, ſo much the better; the remittance is eligible, becauſe it is more direct; the freight and other charges, leſs; and you conſequently, better able to underſell your European rivals: However, you may determine that point. Your ſervants there muſt have in charge, to provide cotton and pepper for the China market, in ſufficient quantities to load annually three or four ſhips. The means by which I propoſe to pay for, and convey it to China, will appear in its proper place.

Experience hath long ſince ſhewn, that ſhips built with oak, and joined together with wooden trunnels, are by no means ſo well calculated to reſiſt the extremes of heat and damp, in the tropical latitudes of Aſia, as the ſhips which are built in India of tekewood, and bound with iron ſpikes and bolts. There is vaſt plenty of tekewood in Aſia, particularly on the Malabar coaſt, both to the north and ſouth of Bombay. It is well known to Sir George Pococke, and many other great ſea officers, that the Company have there a well furniſhed marine yard, with three very large and good dry docks, and ſlips for building ſhips of ſufficient burthen for the Company's ſervice as merchantmen. I will ſay nothing on the utility, or inutility, of the ſtate permitting the Company to build ſhips there, on which to tranſport their Aſiatic merchandize to Europe, becauſe I am not a competent judge of the matter, as it relates to the neceſſity of

uſing

uſing none but ſhips built in the mother country, for the purpoſe of national trade, as ſet forth in that great palladium of Engliſh commerce, the act of navigation. But I could wiſh to have a law paſ-ſed, by which the Company ſhould be permitted to build two ſhips annually, at Bombay, of teke-wood, in every reſpect like unto the beſt conſtruct-ed ſhips in the royal navy, carrying each ſixty guns. With ſuch a grant, a very powerful naval force might be gradually, and almoſt imperceptibly, formed of ſhips, every way better calculated to re-ſiſt the inclemency of the climate, and ready to arm, when ever the exigencies of the ſtate ſhall re-quire them to be armed. As to finding employ-ment for them in times of peace, or manning of them in times of war, there will be no difficulty in effecting either, provided the government will conſent, that when ever they ſhall find it for the good of the ſtate, to order any of theſe ſhips into commiſſion, the Captains then in command of them, ſhall take the rank that day as poſt Captains, and the Officers receive commiſſions as Lieuten-ants in the royal navy, provided there be no legal objections to their becoming King's Officers, and that they themſelves are willing to ſerve. Beſides this, the government muſt pay to the Company, the firſt coſt and outfit of the ſhip and her ſtores.

The number of men neceſſary to navigate theſe ſhips as merchant-men, I ſuppoſe to be about one

hundred and ſixty ſeamen, excluſive of officers: theſe, together with their guns, cordage, ſail-cloth, and ſundry other ſtores, not to be had in India, muſt be ſent out annually on the ſtore ſhips above mentioned; and as thoſe ſtore ſhips are to be ſold in India, it will by no means be difficult to procure good commanders and active officers, when they know, that on their arrival at Bombay, they will be removed into line of battle ſhips, which, in caſe of neceſſity, will be taken into the King's ſervice, and ſo have an honourable proviſion for life. For the firſt year after the ſhips are built, I would have them employed on the Malabar coaſt as guard ſhips, with one tier of their guns mounted; in which time, the men would learn their exerciſe; the good qualities or defects of the ſhips, would be diſcovered; and the marine force at Bombay, be properly augmented with a reſpectable addition, always ready to ſupport the Company's intereſt, and render ſervice to their country, when called out to action. Who does not ſee, that with two ſuch ſhips continually on the coaſt, that an immediate reduction may be made both on the Company's land and ſea forces, fully adequate to the expence of manning and victualling of them? If the ſhips ſhould be called to augment the King's ſquadron, before an opportunity offers to man them complete, there will always be to be found at ſuch a populous trading town, and free mercantile port, as I hope Bombay will ſhortly be, Laſcars, Cof-

N frees,

frees, and other Asiatic seamen, in plenty, to complete the necessary number. Most of the land forces may serve as marines, if action is expected; for I know of no other use they will be of; for I hope we have done with continental wars; and that man knows little of the Asiatics, who conceives that they will come to attack you on your Islands. As for the French, arm yourselves as Englishmen ought ever to be armed, and let them attempt it if they dare.

LEAST any naval officer should sneer at my plan for manning ships occasionally for the King's service, I wish to remind him of the three sea engagements, which happened in India during the last war, in which those great naval officers, Sir George Pococke and Admiral Stevens, commanded. We kept the sea, it is true, and the French left it, but not till they had effected what they came to effect, throwing supplies into their garrisons on shore. They each time bore up to, or lay by for the British squadron. One ship of the French, was run on shore in the first action. In all the three we gained honour, it must be admitted; but it cost us many lives, and disabled many of our ships, particularly in the second engagement. Yet in no one of those furious actions, was there more than four, or at most five, of the French King's line of battle ships present; all the others were the French Company's trading ships, more than half manned with Coffrees.

If

If ever a people were drubbed who won the battle, the English squadron, under the command of Sir George Pococke, in the East Indies, had that honour on the 3d day of August, in the year of our Lord 1758. Will a French Officer dare attempt against an English squadron, what an English Officer, in similar circumstances, would not attempt against a French one? I will not believe it. I have known many naval officers on service in the East Indies, but never was acquainted with one of them, who, had he had the honour to have commanded one of the King of England's sixty gun ships, manned with two hundred English seamen, and three hundred Lascars, Coffrees, and other natives of Asia, that would have declined coming to action with the best French ship of war that ever appeared in those seas. I am not an advocate for using foreigners to man the royal navy; but if Englishmen are not to be had in those distant regions, to full man the ships in time of war, the alternative is not a bad one. Nor will any English Admiral hesitate to strengthen his squadron with the Company's ships of war, constructed, armed, and mannend, as above mentioned.*

* The Author has, since the writing of this Letter, been employed to man and command two forty-four gun ships, to reinforce the King's squadron under Sir Edward Vernon, and that officer expressed great pleasure at receiving such assistance, though the ships were manned half and half, as above mentioned.

As I propoſe to have two of thoſe ſhips built every year at Bombay, in times of peace, and more than that number will not be wanting to guard the Malabar, the two firſt built ſhips muſt prepare to quit the coaſt, as ſoon as the others are ready to ſupply their places. In time of peace, the Company will neither want, nor can well afford, to keep above two ſhips of ſuch force in commiſſion. It muſt, therefore, be ſo managed, that at the time they are relieved, that very rich and full cargoes of Malabar goods, be provided for them; viz. cotton, pepper, ſandal-wood, ſhark fins, &c. with which to go to China, and from thence load home to Europe. In the courſe of a few years, a very formidable ſquadron would be collected, built of the beſt wood in the world, to reſiſt the heats and damps of the Indian climate. They will ſuit the Company's trade for any part of India, except Bengal; and if kept in conſtant employment, do much more ſervice for leſs money, than is paid now for the freight ſhips. The additional men which they would require in time of war, would not amount to ſo much as the difference of freight paid for the ſhips of individuals. They would ſerve as convoy for the Company's other ſhips, both out and home; would be at all times ready to augment the King's ſquadrons, if wanted; and would make eight voyages from and to India, inſtead of four, in leſs time, and at much leſs expence. I will, in the courſe of theſe Letters, give a ſketch

of what one of these ships would cost the Company, and what services she would render in the course of ten years, and what such service would cost them on their present plan.

The Company should go on to build, until they had eight of those ships to leave India every year; that is about one third of their number of ships expected home; four of these should be from China, and two from Bombay; the St. Helena and Bencoolen storeship, and the Madrass October ship. In time of war, their homeward bound ships should rendezvous at St. Helena; and all those which arrived by the first of March, should sail as the first division, under convoy of three of the sixty gun ships; the second division on or before the fifteenth of May, with three more of the armed ships; and the other two stay to collect the remainder of the ships of the season, and sail in one or two divisions, as might appear best for the interest of the Company. The China ships should pass the Straits of Sunda, or Malacca, in two divisions, having with them two of the armed ships. And this arrangement would give such security to their trade, that nothing could injure it, without distressing the government for ships for convoy which they sometimes can but ill spare; and very often so late, that the homeward bound ships are obliged to sail from St. Helena without them.

FOR

For my own part, I own myſelf to be ſo ſanguine in my expectations, that Bengal will be able to ſupply in a very few years, under your management, the means of ſending three or four of theſe ſhips, from the Malabar coaſt to China, richly laden with proper cargoes, to furniſh tea, raw ſilk, and china ware, for their returning cargoes to Europe, that I have not a doubt about it. All I aſk, is honeſt men for our managers, good allowance for Captains and Officers, and rigid diſcipline to keep them to their duty.

Having laid the foundation for a future addition of marine force for the uſe of my country, I would proceed to the further connecting of our Aſiatic commerce, but am called aſide by that moſt extraordinary genius, the Author of the Hiſtory of the Eaſt and Weſt Indies.

There is ſuch animating deſcriptions of people, places, and things, in every part of the Abbé's works, that except in the accounts of tranſactions at which a man has himſelf been preſent, one can hardly withhold an implicit belief of every thing he ſays. Had I not had an intimate knowledge of the tranſactions that have happened on the continent of India, in which the European nations have been concerned, for theſe twenty-five years paſt, and been myſelf, more than once, trading at every port, from Surat along the coaſts of Malabar and

Cromandel

Coromandel to Bengal, as well as in the Gulfs of Mocha and Persia, I should not have doubted the Abbé's description of them, any more than I did his account of any other nation, place, or people, whom I have never seen or heard of. But when I find him stating facts falsely, and then arguing on them, and drawing conclusions as if they were true, I own it raises in my mind, a kind of involuntary sceptiscism to all historical anecdotes, except they come much better authenticated than many of the Abbé's, which relate to affairs and transactions in India.

I HAVE heard that Mr. Robertson, the writer of the Life of the Emperor Charles V. had some thoughts of writing the History of the East Indies, but dropped it on the Abbé's History coming out. I am sorry for this; because a work of that kind, impartially drawn up, would be universally useful. There are I am certain, authentic documents sufficient in Europe, to ascertain every important fact which need to be known. Nor would so respectable an historian be refused access to them in Portugal, France, Holland, or England. Shakespeare's historical plays, which treat of the wars between the Houses of York and Lancaster, contain a better History of England, during the reigns of the Princes of those Houses, than the Abbé's doth of the transactions which have passed in India since the year 1740.

The Abbé, in the ſecond volume and fifth book of his hiſtory, as tranſlated by Juſtamond, determines, that it is for the intereſt of Europe in general, and each maritime ſtate in particular, that a briſk trade ſhould be carried on with that part of Aſia called India; that it is the cauſe of population in a much greater proportion, than it cauſes the deſtruction of the human ſpecies; and inſtances the populouſneſs of the maritime ſtates in proof of his aſſertions. He alſo proves, that by imitating the commodities of Aſia, induſtry hath been greatly increaſed in Europe; and that no part of its products enervates or weakens, the conſtitutions of the Europeans, when conſumed in Europe. That the trade to Aſia increaſes the conſumption of the produce of Europe, and multiplies our employments. That finding a vend for a part of the wealth of Mexico and Peru, it cauſes the mines of thoſe kingdoms to be wrought with greater ſpirit; and that European nations, being the carriers of the eaſt and weſtern worlds, benefit extremely from the diſcovery of, and trade to both: And concludes, and I think very juſtly, that ſince the communication Europe hath kept up with Aſia and America, its inhabitants are become more numerous, more civilized, more humane, and infinitely richer. In the ſame volume and book, page the 3d, the Abbé ſeems to lament that the French were tedious and ſlow, and a long time before they availed themſelves of their power in India, to attempt

tempt the ſubverſion of the Mogul empire. When they did attempt it, they ſucceeded ſo far as to ruin for a time, thoſe noble provinces, and deſtroy entirely their own beneficial trade to India, as the Portugueze had done before them; and in which pernicious ſcheme, I much fear, the Engliſh will be too apt to follow their example. It is this epidemical infatuation for conqueſt of which I complain It is big with the deſtruction of the Britiſh commerce to Aſia; and which to prevent, I would with pleaſure lay down my life, if that would impede its progreſs. Had I the great abilities of the Abbé, I would paint the miſtakes of my countrymen in ſuch lively colours, that ſhould draw their attention over to their real and true intereſts; and warn them in time of the ruin, into which they ſeem to be ſo blindly precipitating themſelves and their country.

I MUST quote entire, the next paragraph in the ſame page of the Abbé's works, becauſe I never ſaw ſuch great truths, and ſuch groſs miſtakes, blended together in ſo few words.

'THE Engliſh, more prudent, did not attempt 'to aggrandize themſelves, until they had ſtripped 'the French of their acquiſitions, and till no rival 'nation could contend with them. The certainty 'of having none but the natives to contend with, 'determined them to fall on Bengal. It was the

'province

'province of all India, which afforded moſt com-
'modities fit for the markets of Aſia and Europe,
'and was likely to conſume moſt of their manu-
'factures, and alſo that which their flag could beſt
'protect, having the advantage of great rivers they
'have conquered; and they flatter themſelves,
'they ſhall long enjoy the fruit of their victory.'

It is notorious, even from the Abbé's own Hiſtory, that the Engliſh never ſtirred out of their factories, on the Coromandel coaſt, until they ſaw that the ſucceſs which the French met with in the war which terminated in 1748, had turned their heads to conqueſt and dominion. The loſs of Madraſs, and the unſucceſsful attempt made by Boſcawen on Pondicherry, had weakened the Engliſh extremely in the Carnatic. The French thought the opportunity fair to drive them off the coaſt entirely; and very poſſibly they would have ſucceeded, but for the efforts of the brave Lawrence, and his intrepid ſcholar in the art of war, Clive. The troops of both nations acted as auxiliaries to Princes of the country; and it muſt be admitted, that both ſides took every opportunity to ſtrengthen their intereſt all over the Deccan; but neither the French or the Engliſh, had the moſt diſtant idea of attempting a conqueſt of Bengal. When the troubles commenced in 1756, the French had at Chandernagore, and their ſettlements in that kingdom, three times the force that the Engliſh had at Calcutta,

cutta, and their out factories. It is true that at this period, a war was expected to break out between the two nations in Europe, on account of their American disputes: But no idea was formed, or could be formed, of a conquest of Bengal, when the injudicious conduct of Drake, the Governor of Calcutta, involved the whole settlement in ruin, and brought on the expulsion of his countrymen. This was one of those accidents, which unexpectedly lead the way to most extraordinary events. The English happened to have in India, and unemployed, four ships of the line, commanded by some of the best officers the nation could ever boast. A Watson carried the flag, and a Speke commanded the flag ship, which was to lead the way over those dangerous sands the Brasses, which seem to forbid the entrance of large ships into the River of Bengal. But nature herself is sometimes obliged to give way to true heroism. Even one Smith, a pilot, had the glorious flame lighted up in his mind. Inspired by the intrepid spirit of Speke, he was induced to undertake what, unsupported by such a hero, his cooler reason would have deterred him from attempting. The ships were carried safely into the river; and the greatest of all English soldiers (Clive) landed with a handful of men. He dispersed the millions who opposed him; and the English flag was again seen to fly in their own little territory. Even yet no conquest of the country was thought of. It would lead me too far out of my way, to

say

ſay what made it neceſſary at length to ſubdue it. We have it, and, as the Abbé ſays, flatter ourſelves we ſhall keep it; nor is ſuch flattery ill founded, if my countrymen are not chained down by inevitable fate, to work out their own undoing. Save them, moſt gracious God; I beſeech thee, ſave them. Bury in the overflowings of thy infinite mercy, their errors and miſtakes. Continue you to us the diſintereſted, the generous, the manly, and charitable *Haſtings*; and recall the avenging demon, parent of informers, and father of lies, *Clavering*.

The Abbé declares, that the Engliſh having ſtripped the French of their acquiſitions, and having no European nation to contend with, determined them to fall on Bengal. There never was an aſſertion ſo void of truth. At the breaking out of the war in 1756, the French were ſuperior in power to the Engliſh, in every part of India; and the Engliſh Company had great cauſe to fear for their poſſeſſions. But they were fortunate in having ſome of the beſt officers in the univerſe; men whoſe intrepidity of ſoul was equal to any enterprize. Watſon and Clive had diſlodged the famous pirate Angria, from all his ſtrong holds on the Malabar, and were ſo luckily weak in men, that the Company could not hold them: they were, therefore, fortunately for us, given up to the Mahrattas, for a ſmall conſideration. Soon after the ſquadron had reached the Coromandel coaſt, the troubles

troubles commenced in Bengal, from the caufes above mentioned. Happily for the Englifh, the Subah, a rafh inexperienced young man, judged of the fpirit of the whole Englifh nation, from what he had feen of the irrefolute behaviour of a few ill armed and undifciplined individuals at Fort William, and neglected to put an end to the war, by driving them entirely out of the country. He fuffered them to collect together at a place called Fulta, about forty miles from Calcutta, and keep there in a body, until Watfon and Clive could come to their relief. Then their knowledge of the country and language, and their juft refentments, were of great ufe in the eftablifhing of their affairs. But fo far were they from thinking of making a conqueft of Bengal, that I am confident, the Englifh would very willingly have compounded with the Subah, for leave to refettle their factory on the former footing. Clive, who had ftudied the nature and genius of the Afiatics, and knew them better than any other European ever did, or perhaps ever will, foon difcovered, that Surajah ul Dowlah was a Prince, on the faith of whofe promifes no dependence could be placed. This, and the news of a war having commenced between the French and Englifh in Europe, determined the Admiral and the General, to diflodge the French from their fettlement of Chandernagore, and carry the war into the heart of the Nabob's dominions, in order the fooner to bring him to reafon.

THE

The following ten papes of the Abbé's fifth book, is ſuch a rhapſody of extraordinary and contradictory aſſertions, that I have not penetration enough to comprehend what principle it is that he wiſhes to inculcate.—The interior parts of Hindooſtan can, and cannot, be eaſily conquered. It may, and it may not, be eaſily held by Europeans.—The natives are, and are not, good ſoldiers.—Their armies are, and are not, formidable.—In ſhort, it ſeems to me, that the Author of the Hiſtory of the Eaſt and Weſt Indies, poſſeſſes a moſt fertile and creative imagination, and that his principal ſtudy is to dreſs his ideas up in beautiful flowing language, totally regardleſs whether his aſſertions correſpond with, or run counter to each other. I have not hitherto been able to diſcover from the Abbé's works, whether he hath perſonally viſited any particular country, or ſtudied the genius or character of any particular people in their own country. But I am confident he never was in Hindooſtan: or if he was, he took on hearſay, all that he has written on that famous part of the world, and might as well have ſtaid at home. When a writer uſes the dogmatical ſtile on ſubjects of which he is maſter, truth compenſates for the manner in which it is conveyed; but it is intolerable when made the vehicle of ignorance, or wilful miſrepreſentation. The Abbé's countryman, Bernier, in his writings, both inſtructs and pleaſes. He wrote of what he ſaw, and what he knew; and has

has left behind him the beſt account of Hindooſtan any where to be met with.

A NEUTRALITY between the European nations in India, whilſt they are at war with each other in Europe, is too ridiculous an idea to merit conſideration; nor can I conceive for what purpoſe the Abbé introduced it, any more than I can his other chimerical idea, of wiſhing the ſtates of Europe might become one great mercantile commonwealth, except to ſhew the moderation and humanity of his diſpoſition. But I am not ill pleaſed to find ſo learned a man, agreeing ſo entirely with me, that the military ſpirit is deſtructive of the mercantile; and that neglect of firſt principles, hath been the ruin of both the Portugueze and French trade in India; becauſe I hope it will be a ſtrong inducement to the Engliſh to avoid their miſtakes, by purſuing a different conduct.

I AM totally indifferent whether the other European nations adopt the Abbé's medium plan of conducting their Aſiatic trade, by companies without charters, or by individuals, as their ſubjects ſhall ſee fit, providing the Engliſh nation dot not adopt it. He proves, beyond contradiction, that the diſtance which Europe is placed from India, and other difficulties which inevitably ariſe from the nature of the trade, that it is impoſſible for individuals to carry it on, without injury to the country

country to which they belong, and ruin to themſelves. That let what European nation ſoever, attempt the Indian trade by ſmall companies, or individuals, they will naturally, and for their own ſecurity, unite at laſt. This the Abbé ſays, is the opinion and practice of all the trading nations in Europe, who have any communication by ſea to Aſia. Is it not ſurpriſing that the author, after having made this appear, by inſtancing ſuch facts, that no one man can doubt of them, ſhould propoſe to take away the only barrier, which the wiſdom of ages hath hitherto been able to invent, to prevent the evils which the adventurous mercantile infatuation of individuals would cauſe to flow in upon us, the excluſive charter? Individuals, and ſmall companies, of the ſame country, ſays the Abbé, will ruin one another. All nations by experience, have found it to be ſo. The remedy was to conſtitute a company, whoſe ſtock ſhould be ſufficient to carry on as much trade to Aſia, as the intereſt of the particular nation to which the company belonged, could bear. To prevent individual rivals, who had hitherto diſtreſſed the company, injured their country, and ruined themſelves, excluſive charters were granted. What ſecurity doth the Abbé offer, that the evils will not return, when the remedy is taken away? Is the ſpirit of adventure, formerly ſo conſpicuous in individual European merchants, now no more? Until the Abbé proves that it is, I hope the Engliſh nation will have the

wiſdom

wisdom to conduct her Asiatic trade by the medium of one great, chartered, well regulated company.

SINCE the discovery of the passage by the Cape of Good Hope to Asia, no European nation hath ever possessed such mercantile advantages as the English nation now doth, from the situation of her settlements in India: The well combining and conducting of those advantages, is what, I think, they have hitherto been very inattentive to. The trade from India to India, as the Abbé calls it, is certainly of national utility, when indulged to free merchants, free mariners, and other individuals, who have found the way to India; but it often languishes in their hands in particular parts, to the great prejudice of the whole. The prosperity of Bengal, is of the highest national importance to Great Britain. It flourishes or decays, as its export trade is well or ill managed. At present, the exports to the other parts of Asia, is solely in the hands of individuals, and they are not competent to the good management of it. Instead of restrictions, every indulgence should be given them; and some of the branches, the Company should themselves attend to. Of these branches, I have said something in the First Letter. I have yet a great deal more to say on the same subject, when it comes under consideration.

The French, Daniſh, and Portugueze nations, trade to India much on the ſame terms that the Engliſh and Dutch now do to China; they import ſufficient of the commodities of that diſtant country, to ſerve their own internal conſumption. The French aim at more. They wiſh to ſhare with the maritime powers, a part of the advantages ariſing from the re-exportation trade. Nor do I think it poſſible for the wit of man, to deviſe a plan more likely to effect that purpoſe, than that which the Abbé propoſes. The Dutch ſupply all Europe with ſpices. It is now in the power of the Engliſh, to ſupply all Europe with the commodities of Bengal, excepting the nations above mentioned, who trade there for themſelves; nor would I wiſh to ſee them deprived of that natural priviledge, to which they have a right, in times of peace, by the laws of God and man. But as one or other of the nations of Europe, who trade to India, muſt have the advantage of ſupplying with Aſiatic commodities, Turkey, Ruſſia, the Empire, and many other ſtates who do not trade by ſea to Aſia, it is fair, juſt, and ſound mercantile policy in the Engliſh, to ſecure, from the lucky circumſtances of their favourable ſituation, thoſe advantages to themſelves.

Before the conqueſt of Bengal by the Engliſh, all the nations of Europe, who traded to that kingdom, brought ſilver to make good the balance againſt them. They may, with proper management,

ment, be forced to bring it again; and bring they ſhould, or ſtay away.

THERE are eſtabliſhed ſtandards for the quality and goodneſs of all the articles of merchandize in every civilized part of the world. Thoſe of Bengal are well known, both for the Europe and Aſiatic markets; all of which, that can be wrought up to thoſe ſtandards, the natives ſhould find a ready ſale for, at the Engliſh Company's warehouſes in Calcutta, and in the provinces; and they ſhould ſend them to every market in Aſia and Europe, where there could a vend be found for them. What ever you receive for thoſe goods, is the neat proceeds of their induſtry. Would you wiſh a richer mine of real wealth? Not all thoſe poſſeſſed by the Spaniards, from California to the Straits of Maghellan, on one ſide of the great American continent, or by the Spaniards and Portugueze, from the Gulf of Mexico to Cape Horn, on the other, is a millioneth part ſo valuable. In working their mines, they depopulate whole regions, and debaſe human nature below the brute creation. In working of yours, you multiply the human race, and give to millions a taſte of liberty and independence. Make freedom flouriſh, where, until your arrival, the word was not underſtood. And in doing this, you, at the ſame time, raiſe your nation to a higher degree of opulence, than

any other people hath hitherto experienced on the face of the earth. Two millions of Bengal goods, imported into the River of London, produces fifty times the national utility, that ten millions of silver, brought home by the Spanish galleons to Cadiz, doth to Spain.

Navigation and trade is the proper motto to the arms of Britainnia; a bale of cloth, and a hogshead of sugar, her supporters; wool, raw-silk, pepper, calicoes, and tobacco, shine bright in the quarters; a code of her own jurisprudence, and a bag of wheat, make her a soft cushion; and a line of battle ship, the most glorious crest in the universe.

It is absolutely an act of madness, the keeping up such military establishments, as the English now do on the Malabar and Coromandel coast. They continually distress the Company; and the more you conquer, the more will that distress increase. To continue always armed, because you may at some future time possibly be attacked, is weakening yourselves, whilst your enemy grows stronger by being at peace.

Before the war which commenced in 1756, Bombay, and the Company's other settlements on the Malabar coast, bore their own expences, and transmitted to Europe, a very considerable balance.

Some

Some years it amounted to an entire cargo of pepper. At present, they cost the Company immense sums annually. In short, there is no kind of economy; for as the Bombay servants have only to draw on Bengal for supplies, and the Company order they should be supplied, without caring what they do with the money, how can it be otherwise? Is there a Director in Leadenhall-Street, who knows that Mr. Hastings, since his accession to the government of Bengal, has supported their other settlements in India, with above a million sterling, and that mostly in cash? They never attended to this, nor to his representation, that such heavy drains, made constantly in ready money, or by bill, must in the end be destructive to Bengal. Do they know, that he has paid off a heavy debt of a million and a half more, which he found due on bond on his coming to their chair? Do they know, that from Bengal he has supplied them in Europe, with more than sufficient to pay off all their debts at home, although it amounted to near three millions, when he took their affairs in hand? And lastly, do they know, that there is at this moment, March the 25th, 1777, more than one million and a half sterling in their Bengal treasury? If they know all this, will they be so candid as to inform the public, on what principles the majority acted, when, in May 1776, after the ships of the season were dispatched, they voted an address to the King, to recall Mr. Hastings from his government?

ment? Hitherto we know not at Bengal, the upshot of that moſt iniquitous proceeding. I uſe that harſh appellation, becauſe the meaſure deſerved it. I call upon them in this public manner, to prove one ſingle act of peculation, or mal-adminiſtration, on this great Engliſh Viceroy. Will they not hide their heads with ſhame and diſgrace, when the whole nation ſhall know, that in the courſe of thirty months, which has elapſed ſince the ſelfiſh, brutal Clavering has been here, though he has had every villain in the country, both Europeans and natives, in his ſervice, to ſuborn evidence, and invent ſtories, againſt the Governor General, that not one of the numerous charges, ſent home by Clavering and his party, hath been proved againſt him in Aſia or in Europe?

In the moſt ſolemn manner I declare, (and I ſign my name to this paper, which the printer may ſhew to whom he pleaſes,) that I do believe, that in no period of time, did a ſtronger inſtance appear, which confirmed the maxim, that innocence alone, is ſufficient ſupport to a man in every ſituation of life, (if he does not deſert himſelf,) than what has happened to Mr. Haſtings in Bengal.

A word or two more with the Abbé Reynal, ſhall cloſe this Letter. Who is it that does not ſee the ſecret drift of that laborious and, as it relates to Great Britain, inflammatory production? According

cording to the Abbe's account, England is a haughty and unjuſt rival to France, a falſe friend to Holland, a ſecret enemy to Spain, and a tyrant over Portugal. "Are the Portugueze to be com-"pared to theſe upſtarts, whoſe heads are turned "by the embarraſſment which their newly acquired "riches occaſion?" The laſt lines are in the Abbé's own words, as Juſtamond has tranſlated them. They are to be found in book the ninth, page 527, of the ſecond volume. I hate quotation of all kinds, and therefore muſt refer the reader to the whole work; in the peruſal of which, if he doth not diſcover, that the principal view of the writer, is to inflame the great trading ſtates in Europe againſt the Engliſh nation, I am extremely miſtaken. If the States General could be brought to join the family compact, it is not unlikely, but a confederate war might be entered into by the four above mentioned powers againſt Great Britain. Such a combination would certainly not be a deſirable one; but I ſee not that it is to be feared. It would have one good effect; it would unite us among ourſelves, and then we ſhould have little to dread from ſuch a war. Paſſion and prejudice would not be ſufficient to permit ſuch a confederacy to draw together long, whoſe real intereſts are ſo different. If the Dutch and Portugueze are ſo infatuated, as not to diſcover at firſt, the ſecret deſigns of France, the capricious impatience of that volatile nation, will ſoon open their eyes. The Abbé has taken

great

great care to ſhew his countrymen, that the other four ſtates have ſhared them almoſt entirely out in the eaſtern and weſtern world; and that the moſt likely way for them to force themſelves in for a better portion of the mercantile plumb-cake, is to inflame the minds of the Dutch, Spaniards, and Portugueze, againſt what he calls the rapacious greedineſs of the Engliſh, and thereby to ſet them all together by the years, that they may run away with great part of the ſpoil. The Abbé ſays there are circumſtances and events, which, when well attended to, plainly foretel the great revolutions in ſtates and governments; and he inſinuates clearly enough, that he foreſees the decline of the Britiſh empire. He gives the Engliſh ſome good advice, but then would wiſh it to be underſtood to mean, that it is now too late for them to follow it. I remember a countryman of the Abbé's, who, after the capture of Mahon, by the Duke de Richlieu, in the laſt war, applied the *delenda eſt Carthago* to Great Britain, as dogmatically and unprophetically, as the Abbé himſelf could do. His countrymen can intrigue, dreſs a wig, walk a minuet, and fight for half an hour, as well as any men upon earth; but then they have no bottom. Set their blood a running, and they run alſo. Old John ever hath, and ever will drub them. If Strut and Frog, and Tom the Duſtman, interpoſe, to ſave Baboon from the cudgelling his reſtleſs petulance may give him a juſt title to expect, they will have to thank them-

ſelves

ſelves for their folly, if, in the fray, they get a broken pate, as Strut lately did, over which, to this hour, he wears a black patch. It may heal, if it is left to nat... and to time. But if ſuch ſtate empirics as the Abbé, will be tampering, teizing, and fretting the part, and Bull, in his juſtly rouſed rage, ſhould give them another butt, and knock the Havannah againſt Carthagena, or Mexico againſt Peru, or ſink the whole in the great gulf of the Britiſh empire, of which the Abbé tells ſuch diſmal ſtories, who in the name of goodneſs will be able to prevent it? Not Louis, take my word for it. He will, in the day of trial, keep aloof from danger, as his well known and deteſted anceſtor did, in the former naval wars, which he fomented between the maritime ſtates, when the Britiſh diadem was ſullied by the filthy brows of a libertine Stuart.

If the Abbé's Hiſtory of the Indies, was to be tranſlated into all the languages and dialects, which are ſpoken, and have been ſpoken, by the different people of whom he writes, from the days of the great Columbus to the preſent times, and ſome knowing and judicious men of each nation and community, were to ſtrip him of all the falſe facts, and conſequently falſe reaſoning, eſtabliſhed on them, which related to their own particular ſtate or community, to what a ſnug little pocket companion would his voluminous works be reduced. I know

he is wrong in a great number of the facts, he so dogmatically relates of the affairs transacted in the East Indies, and that lessens my confidence in him, when I read his account of other people, and other nations, of whom I know nothing. Yet so indolent and indifferent are mankind in general, as to matters which do not relate immediately to themselves, or their friends, that they swallow with great avidity, every story that is conveyed to them in such harmonious and correct language, in which, I am told, the original is written. If Mr. Hastings lives, I hope an honest history of Hindoostan from his pen. If not, surely there are in the nation, men of honour and abilities, who have public spirit enough to search the national and Company's records, and apply to numbers of men yet alive, and from them collect materials sufficient to refute the hasty and undigested assertions of this French Abbé. Were I as equal to the task as many men I know, who have served their country in India, I should think it indispensably my duty, as an Englishman, to undertake it. Impotent as I am, and weak in learning and natural abilities, I will, from time to time, bring to the test some of the Abbé's mistakes, in the course of these Letters, and that is all I can do.

THE END.